

**THE PLA IN CHINA'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY-MAKING:
DRIVERS, MECHANISM AND INTERACTIONS**

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Abstract

This dissertation develops a “dynamic bargaining” thesis, in which a two-level bargaining game among three actors (the Chinese Communist Party (Party), the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), and the civilian foreign affairs system) determines the level of influence the PLA exerts over China’s foreign and security policy-making since 1978. This dissertation is based on 138 interviews with active-duty and retired military officers, 125 interviews with policy-makers and analysts in China, and original Chinese-language sources and secondary documents.

The dissertation divides China’s foreign and security policies into “high” policies – those that are sensitive and core national interests and require the intervention of China’s top leader – and “low” policies – those that are tactical in nature and constitute the majority of China’s foreign and security policies.

The dynamics of a “reliance-control model” determine the PLA’s influence in “high” policies. The top leader’s political reliance on the PLA is the first and foremost necessary condition for such Party-military bargaining to occur. Once this necessary condition is met, the extent to which the top leader is able to establish “effective control” over the PLA helps determine the PLA’s access and hence the level of its influence.

In “low” policies, the PLA’s level of influence depends on its bureaucratic bargaining with the civilian foreign affairs system, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA or MOFA). Such bargaining has operated on the basis of four rules of the game, namely the advantage of: early entry during times of overwhelming external threats; strong allies/weak opponents; strong motivations; and supportive public opinion.

The level of influence the PLA exerts in the policy-making process is also partly determined by its motivation. The PLA is a military force in transition, and its motivation to intervene during the policy-making process is determined by three sets of dynamics: inward vs. outward orientation; professionalization vs. politicization; and unity vs. inter-service rivalry. This dissertation argues that the PLA has a political orientation of being “progressive moderates” in China’s domestic politics, which contributes to its preoccupation with its internal mission and deepens the differentiation between the Party’s and military’s interest, outlook, and goal. As a result of its own evolution, the PLA is likely not seeking major armed confrontation, but may be more welcoming of continuous friction and low-intensity wars of limited scope.

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Commonly Used Abbreviations

ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
AELSG	Arms Export Leading Small Group
AMS	PLA Academy of Military Sciences
ARATS	Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits
ASAT	Anti-satellite Weapon
ASL	Anti-Secession Law
C4ISR	Command, Control, Communications and Computer-based Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
CAS	Chinese Academy of Sciences
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCPCC	CCP Central Committee
CFAO	Central Foreign Affairs Office
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CMC	Central Military Commission
CMS	China Maritime Surveillance
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
COMINTERN	Communist International
COSTIND	Commission on Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CR	Cultural Revolution
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
DCGS	Deputy Chief of General Staff
DOC	Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
ECFA	Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
FAO	PLA GSD Foreign Affairs Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLEC	Fisheries Law Enforcement Command
FOC	Flag of Convenience
GAD	PLA General Armament Department
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GLD	PLA General Logistics Department
GO	General Office
GPD	PLA General Politics Department
GSD	PLA General Staff Department
ID	CCP International Department
KMT	Kuomintang
LSG	Leading Small Group
MAC	Mainland Affairs Council

MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MND	Ministry of Defense
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
MPS	Ministry of Public Security
MR	Military Region
MRD	Military Region Deputy
MRP	Military Region Principal
MSPAC	Military Strategic Planning Advisory Committee
MSPC	Military Strategic Planning Committee
MSS	Ministry of State Security
NSLSG	National Security Leading Small Group
SPD	PLA GSD Strategic Planning Department
TALSG	Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group
TAO	Taiwan Affairs Office
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NDU	PLA National Defense University
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National People's Congress
NSC	National Security Commission
PAP	People's Armed Police
PBSC	Politburo Standing Committee
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	PLA Air Force
PLAN	PLA Navy
PME	Professional Military Education
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRMC	People's Revolutionary Military Commission
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SCS	South China Sea
S&ED	China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue
SEF	Straits Exchange Foundation
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SLD	State Leader Deputy
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SLP	State Leader Principal
SOA	State Oceanic Administration
SSD	Strategic Security Dialogue
TBA	Taiwanese Business Association

Chapter One: Introduction: Towards a “Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis

In any country’s foreign and security policy-making process, civilian and military actors make uncomfortable bedfellows. In China, interactions between civilians and soldiers in the policy-making process are even more intricate than it is in the West. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP or the Party) supersedes and penetrates both the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the State/government institutions, and the latter two in turn participate in and influence the direction of the Party’s rule.

Prior to the implementation of the reform and opening policy in 1978, this political “trinity” – consisting of the Party, the PLA, and the State – was logical and worked efficiently, as there was little differentiation between these three actors. Under Mao Zedong, every institution followed his lead, and he was able to exert near absolute control over all three of these actors. As the PLA and the State/government continue to “professionalize” and “specialize,” power will inevitably continue to decentralize, which will in turn lead to the Party’s further fragmentation.¹ As a result, in the post-Deng era the Party’s top leader relies on the PLA’s support to an unprecedented extent, which drives the leader to go out of his way to establish effective and even exclusive control over the military.

The evolution of the PLA itself, typified by its increased professionalization and differentiation from the Party, has led to a military that increasingly focuses on its narrow institutional interests and is more “extroverted” or “outward-oriented” — targeting external threats and exerting influence over issues that strongly motivate the military. In

other words, the PLA has become more similar to its Western counterparts. The transformation of both the PLA and the Party makes the PLA an indispensable actor in the power landscape of the Party, as security provider-of-last-resort. This, in turn, also affects how the Party interacts with the military and how the PLA bargains with other bureaucracies. The power arrangement that was widely accepted during Mao's era has become an encumbrance and source of tension in China's foreign and security policy-making. Such strife between the Party, the military, and the State makes the "bed" even stranger for these three "bedfellows," although the fact that China is generally governed by consensus, and that the Party's control mechanisms within the State and PLA remain highly pervasive, have thus far prevented chaos and instability.

This dissertation introduces a "dynamic bargaining" thesis, in which a two-level bargaining game among the three actors (the Party, the PLA, and the civilian foreign affairs system) determines the level of influence the PLA exerts over China's foreign and security policy-making process. The basic level of the PLA's influence over "high" policy issues – core and sensitive foreign and security policies in which the top leader intervenes to set China's strategic guidelines – results from the workings of a "reliance-control model" that describes the interactive Party-military relations. At the lower-level policy process, the setting in which the majority of foreign and security policies are shaped, decided and implemented, the PLA's bargaining with the civilian foreign affairs system (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)) operates according to its own rules and logic, largely independent of the dynamic of Party-military relations.

"High" policy issues are those of extremely high strategic importance, which touch on China's core national interests, and may cause major tension with another great

power, severely impact China's external security environment, or affect the top leader's domestic political standing. Some lower-level, "tactical" policies with high stakes, on which various bureaucracies hold serious opposing views and cannot establish a basic consensus on an approach, may then be elevated to the "high" policy arena. "High" foreign and security policies are extremely limited in quantity, since domestic affairs, the economy, consolidating his political power, and fending off challenges to his power occupy most of the top leader's attention.² The top leader can make an enormous impact on any specific foreign and security policy, both "high" and "low," if he is incentivized to intervene. However, "low" policies, which are typically handled through a bureaucratic process, are more liable to be influenced by other actors once the top leader's attention moves away.

Specifically, the "driver" (the PLA's mindset) determines what motivates the PLA to intervene in or refrain from exerting influence over various policies. The PLA's policy tendencies are constrained by its traditional values and its mentality, both of which have been shaped by its history and evolution. With a political orientation of being "progressive moderates" in China's domestic politics, the PLA is preoccupied with its internal mission of acting as "political stabilizer." However, the revolution in military affairs (RMA) and the PLA's continuous professionalization have driven the PLA to be increasingly outward-looking, which this dissertation describes as an "outward-oriented" tendency. The PLA's professionalization elevates the principle of civilian centrality, which constrains the PLA and means that it is generally an interested but passive actor in Chinese politics. Professionalization, however, drives the PLA to be more budget-conscious and "no-war anxious" (anxious about military inertia and its potential lack of

military effectiveness since it has not fought a war in over three decades). The rise of services, particularly the PLA Navy (PLAN), further pushes the PLA to be more “outward-oriented.”

The PLA’s influence over “high” policies is a function of the state of the dynamic Party-military relationship. This dissertation employs a “reliance-control” model to describe how the political and power relations between the top Party leader and the PLA leadership determine the PLA’s degree of policy access and its ability to directly influence policy. The degree to which the top leader politically relies on the military’s political support and the top leader’s ability to establish effective control over the PLA determine the PLA’s political access and hence its ability to influence policy. Whether the top leader is reliant on the PLA’s political support is the first necessary condition for the PLA to enter a bargaining relationship with the top leader. This dissertation argues that all of China’s post-Deng leaders have had a strong political reliance on the PLA, due to the top leader’s weakening authority, the deepening crisis of legitimacy and authority the Party has been facing, and the increased differentiation between the Party’s and the PLA’s goals and interests. When this basic condition – the top leader’s political reliance on the PLA – is established, the top leader needs to be confident that he can rely on the PLA’s allegiance and political support during his time of need, in order to grant access and therefore influence to the PLA. In the post-Deng era, the top leaders do not have the same deep and organic bonds with the PLA that Mao and Deng had, making it a daunting challenge for the top leaders to establish effective control over the PLA. However, unless the top leader establishes effective control, the PLA listens to other master(s), making it a political threat to the top leader. On the other hand, if effective control is established and

the top leader is assured that the PLA will serve loyally as his last line of defense, he will treat the PLA as a strong power base and empower the military by granting it resources and access, and allowing it to exert influence over policies.

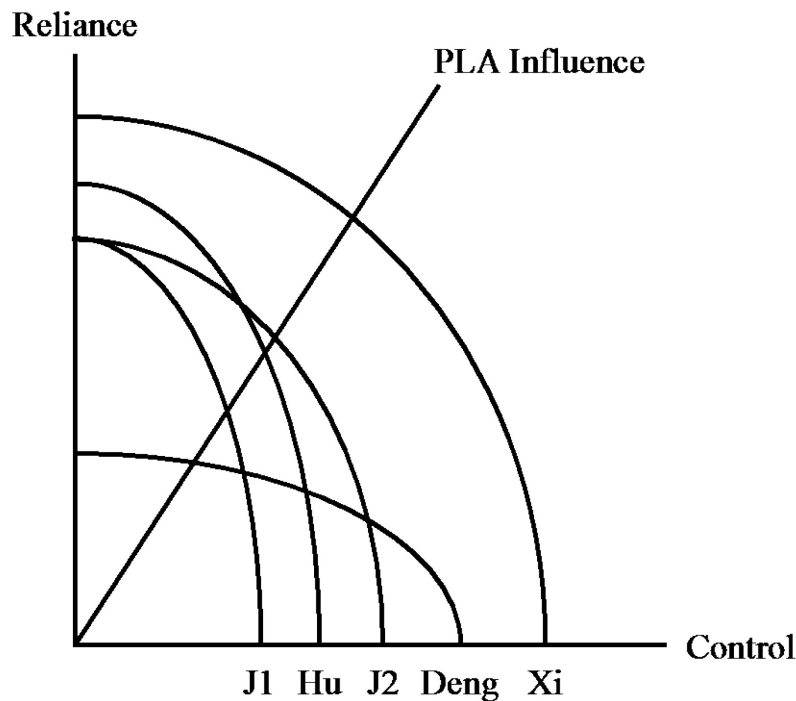
Table 1.1 Summary of the Reliance-Control Model

Reliance	Control	PLA Influence
Low	High	Low
High	Low	Low
High	High	High

*Note: While low reliance and low control is a theoretical possibility, it is inconceivable in China because the combination most likely indicates the “objective control” framework employed in Western democratic countries and therefore it is not included in the above table.

More specifically, the PLA’s influence in “high” policies from 1978 to 2012 could be expressed in a simplified graph as follows:

Figure 1.1 Application of the Reliance-Control Model under Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping



J1: Jiang Zemin (1989-1994)

J2: Jiang Zemin (1995-2004)

In China's high politics, every policy actor keenly understands that access to the top leader is required if one wants to influence policy. Although informal politics exist in Western politics to some degree, in China the ability to enter into the top leader's small circle of advisors (*xiao quanzi*) and gain the top leader's trust fundamentally impacts a policy actor's influence. Formal policy-making mechanisms in China provide an institutionalized platform for the narration and deliberation of a policy course, but the most consequential consultations and decisions are made within this small circle of trusted advisers. Providing policy advice in this small circle endows one with enormous influence, but also carries with it tremendous risks: advice that the top leader is receptive to means the continuation of one's prestige and influence; advice that the top leader rejects could lead to one's removal from this circle and a political demotion. Therefore, access to the top leader in Chinese high politics is not only a necessary condition, but is also possibly even a sufficient condition for an actor to influence the policy-making process.

Although the top leader's political reliance on the PLA and his ability to establish effective control over the PLA determines the degree to which the PLA holds influence over "high" policies, the PLA's policy preferences are not necessarily the same as the top leader's. The PLA leadership that is involved in the "high" policy world must advocate for the military's institutional interest, and therefore may not be able to control the PLA's bureaucratic position on a certain policy issue. Thus, supporting the top leader does not make the PLA leadership a compliant tool completely at the top leader's disposal.

The majority of China's foreign and security policy is the result of the workings of a bureaucratic bargaining process between the PLA and civilian foreign affairs system, which is primarily represented by the MFA, a process governed by four rules of the game. These rules are the advantage of: early entry during times of overwhelming external threats; strong allies/weak opponents (disadvantage of strong opponents); strong motivation; and public opinion that supports one's position.

This dissertation assesses the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy by examining the PLA's bargaining behavior in "high" and "low" policies. The boundary that separates foreign policy from security policy is blurry since a foreign policy issue could evolve into a security concern (for instance, hypothetically, China's support for the U.S. counter-terrorism campaign could cause tensions with elements of Pakistan and worsen the security environment in Northwest China), and a purely security problem, even an internal one, could have far-reaching foreign policy ramifications (such as the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown). Military affairs, which concern China's weapons testing and operational procedures, given the wrong timing, could cause serious foreign and security policy complications.

Military autonomy is not synonymous with military influence. Military autonomy could, however, become a source of influence, even if the military does not intend for it to do so. The PLA will not consult the MFA on issues that is well within the military's mandate, such as weapon testing and deployment, and issues borne out of its operational procedures. The military's tenet, under which "the authority of firing shots lies in the hands of the CMC, but the authority of firing shots back is in the hands of the Fleet," as explained by a senior PLA Navy officer, is revealing about how operational procedures

work in the PLA.³ The PLA's operational procedures, which dictate what the military should and should not do under certain circumstances and is based largely on a military logic and on what the civilians and the military agreed to in the past, works like an automatic machine. Even if a disaster or obstruction forces it to stop, an inertial force will make it continue for an extended period of time. Thus, it remains a challenge for this dissertation to separate the unintended consequences of a policy from a deliberate action, as well as an action taken due to the "inertial force" from disobedience. Despite the detected "motions" and policy consequences, understanding the PLA's intentions is probably the key to making such distinctions and determining which category a particular PLA action falls under.

Significance of this Study

Since the late 1990s, the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policy-making process has become a hot topic, primarily due to the political dynamic described above. As each piece on the chessboard moves around, it is harder for the outside world to understand the direction and pattern of the changes to China's political system. Additionally, misunderstanding and misjudging in U.S.-China relations will carry an increasingly prohibitive price both in terms of the risk of war and "audience costs."⁴ As China increases its comprehensive national power, the structural tensions between China and the U.S. globally and between China and Japan in regional settings make nearly every flashpoint in the security arena a stage for each side to demonstrate its strength and commitment. Yet not every risk of war is aggravated by a purely militarized rivalry. As You Ji insightfully points out, "often times it is hard to demarcate where Beijing's normal

diplomacy ends and where security/military dynamics begin.”⁵ Foreign policy disputes, from disagreements over the South China Sea (SCS) to China’s restriction of rare earth exports to Japan, can hardly be examined without looking at how such disputes relate to other security concerns, and nor can they be kept separate from security frictions in other areas. The PLA remains a black box to other countries, and in their disagreements or disputes with China countries have yet to fully understand how the PLA makes decisions. Finally, the outside world’s fears of China’s assertiveness are magnified by an often unsubstantiated assumption that the PLA both manipulates and leverages China’s increasing nationalism to advocate more aggressive policies, or that civilian leaders are too fearful of the PLA to resist its assertiveness. According to this logic, countries need to resist China and cannot concede an inch, since the PLA will continue to assert itself until it is stopped.⁶

Each time the PLA seems to keep China’s civilian leadership in the dark during a security incident, the outside world raises the question of where the PLA stands and what particular role it plays in China’s intricate policy process. Notable cases of this dynamic include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA) curious 12-day silence following China’s 2007 anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) test, as well as China’s 2011 test flight of its new J-20 stealth aircraft during U.S. Secretary of Defense Bob Gates’ visit, a test flight of which Hu Jintao apparently was unaware.

Even though it is evident that the PLA’s representation in the Party leadership has declined since 1978, there is nonetheless a robust debate about the degree of influence the PLA exerts on China’s foreign and security policies. Journalists who cover China have tended to conclude that as China’s political system continues to fragment and its top

leader exerts less influence, the PLA's power has been increasing.⁷ Scholarly analyses, however, point in the opposite direction. China specialists in the West (Swaine 1996, Tai Ming Cheung 2001, Cabestan 2009, Swaine 2012) seem to have reached a consensus that the PLA's influence on China's policy-making diminished by the end of the 1990s and that this situation did not fundamentally change under Hu Jintao's leadership.⁸ As evidence, such analysts often point to the PLA's loss of representation on the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) after Admiral Liu Huaqing's retirement in 1997 and to it being forced to divest its commercial interests in 1998 as evidence.⁹ In his 2012 study, Michael Swaine reinforced this conclusion by noting that senior military leaders played a more critical role only up to the 1990s.¹⁰

It is critical for the outside world to study the Chinese military's role in foreign and security policy-making. As the U.S.-China relationship becomes increasingly competitive, policy-makers must understand how the PLA establishes its priorities and positions on international affairs and how it then injects those preferences into the civilian policy-making system and the policy debate. There are extensive studies that look at both China's policy-making process and its bargaining mechanism,¹¹ and most studies acknowledge the PLA's role in this process.¹² There are also numerous studies on China's civil-military relations, as well as the PLA's evolution as an organization.¹³ There is a dearth of literature, however, that links these three aspects together and presents a broader paradigm of how the internal dynamics impact and motivate the PLA's policy positioning, and how much influence the PLA enjoys in areas in which it has an interest or a stake. Rather than evaluating and interpreting only the policy outcomes, while leaving the process as a "black box," this study attempts to elucidate the various

calculations of and interactions between different influential actors. The resulting analysis constitutes not only a framework for understanding China's past policies, but also has predictive power for looking at future policy outcomes and helping outsiders understand the long-term trajectory of China's foreign and security policy.

In this "dynamic bargaining" thesis, I hypothesize that the PLA's "mindset" determines its motivation for policy intervention. Additionally, the top Party leader's political reliance on the military is the first necessary condition for the PLA to exert political influence. With the existence of this reliance, the PLA's direct influence hinges on whether the top leader is capable of establishing effective control over the military. Finally, the PLA's influence in tactical foreign and security policies will increase relative to the civilian foreign affairs system during times of overwhelming external threats, when it has strong allies/weak opponents, when it makes clear its strong motivations, or when public opinion supports its position.

Research Rationale

As Ellis Joffe succinctly summarized, the PLA is a "Party-army with professional characteristics."¹⁴ The PLA is not a professional army in the Western sense, as it is not politically impartial. Rather, the PLA has played a key role in almost every turning point in Chinese politics. For example, the PLA helped lead the Cultural Revolution and intervened politically throughout this period (1966-76/77).¹⁵ Its support was crucial for securing the Gang of Four's arrest and restoring Deng Xiaoping to power in 1977. The PLA was also instrumental during the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989. As Fang Zhu has pointed out, "for the PLA officer corps, political participation was an expression of Party

loyalty, not a violation of military professionalism.”¹⁶ The PLA’s involvement in both political and policy interventions has traditionally been perceived by civilian elites as not only legitimate, but also required. The Cultural Revolution and the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, in which senior PLA commanders opposed the Party’s policy but nonetheless carried it out, is evidence of this.¹⁷

Before 1978, the PLA and MFA’s interests and positions with regard to foreign policy could hardly be differentiated. This was mostly a product of the structure of China’s overall political system, which allowed military men to occupy senior government positions, including in the MFA. Premier Zhou Enlai, after 30 years as one of China’s most prominent revolutionary military leaders, served as Foreign Minister from 1949 to 1958, while concurrently serving as the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) (1949-57). Zhou’s successor, Marshal Chen Yi, was Foreign Minister from 1958 to 1972 and Vice Chairman of the CMC from 1959 to 1972. Some senior military officers, such as Geng Biao, were even transferred back to the PLA leadership after a long and distinguished career in the MFA.¹⁸

As Deng Xiaoping ascended to the pinnacle of power, China’s political system, in which “the whims of a single individual assumed monumental importance,” was replaced by a more collective leadership structure, which was combined with a bureaucratic system characterized by fragmentation and bargaining.¹⁹ The Party delegated more responsibility to government bureaucracies such as the MFA. Deng also initiated a drastic set of reforms in the PLA aimed at promoting professionalism, as he streamlined its personnel and set in motion programs that modernized its training, equipment, logistics, and strategic thinking. As the PLA launched a series of programs aimed at increasing

professionalization, by the late 1980s the “revolving door” through which most military men and occasionally civilians passed had closed.²⁰ The gap between a further professionalized PLA and an increasingly institutionalized civilian foreign policy apparatus (embodied primarily in the MFA) widened in terms of policy priorities, approaches to foreign relations, and definition of national interests. The PLA and MFA disagreed on the proper approach to almost all major foreign policy issues, from the South China Sea dispute, to Taiwan’s independence movement, the U.S.–Japan alliance, and the international nonproliferation regime.

The symbiotic relationship between the Party and the PLA began to break down as the generation of “revolutionary soldiers” passed away in the 1990s. Scholars including David Shambaugh thus use “symbiosis” to refer to the “inherent interdependence between the Party and the PLA,” but the definition here differs significantly from the “dualism,” “interlocking directorate,” or the “symbiosis” model originally described.²¹ Arguably, the PLA, as one of the longest-standing and most cohesive bureaucratic institutions in China, with the strongest enforcement capacity, differed from the Party and civilian bureaucracies in values, political and policy orientation, and outlook, even before the PLA started down the path of professionalization after 1978. Such differentiation only deepened, along with the PLA’s accelerated professionalization during the 1990s, which made the military “more complex, specialized, and inward-looking.”²²

Along with this differentiation with regard to policy prescriptions comes the incentive for bureaucratic actors to exert more influence over the policy-making process. Prior to 1978, the PLA as an institution rarely attempted to or succeeded in influencing

the direction of China's foreign and security policy-making. The PLA had not been eager to either take political action or exert influence over the policy process. This was partly a result of Mao's towering status and predominance in the foreign and security policy arena and due to the existence of the "interlocking directorate."²³ In one of the rare cases in which the PLA attempted to express its opinion, as military leaders such as Marshals Lin Biao and Nie Rongzhen expressed the PLA's opposition to China's involvement in the Korean War, Mao attentively listened to but then overruled the military.²⁴ The PLA and MFA were both to a large extent instruments Mao employed and manipulated, and both interacted mostly with the Party, rather than with each other.

After 1978, the PLA was consistently loyal and obedient to Deng. Deng repeatedly made decisions that adversely affected the PLA's institutional interests, including: drastically slashing the defense budget in the 1980s; streamlining the military's personnel and cutting its manpower; putting armament modernization on the backburner; directing the military to engage in commercial activities; and appointing people with mostly civilian credentials and political officers to top military positions. Some of Deng's initiatives (such as prioritizing economic modernization over military modernization) the PLA explicitly agreed to, while others it reluctantly accepted as necessary reforms to strengthen the military (such as the massive streamlining of military personnel and pushing senior military officers out of the Politburo and the Central Committee). Other initiatives simply clipped the military's wings (such as reductions to the defense budget, the deterioration of the PLA's material well-being that led to a brain drain, and the delay of armament modernization). If a military is incapable of keeping

issues that negatively impact it to such an extent off the agenda, it does not enjoy as much power as the outside world attributes to it.

According to this assessment of the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policy after 1978, the military's influence started from a nadir under Deng's command, despite the fact that there were elements in the PLA that periodically questioned, resisted, and attempted to influence policies that they considered to be in conflict with their views. The extent to which the Party's top leader politically relies on the PLA determines how much the PLA can influence policy. If the Party leader does not need the military's support, but can nonetheless establish effective control over the PLA, this means the military's autonomy and influence are lessened.

Since Deng's era, the Party's top leaders have had progressively narrower power bases and fewer sources of legitimacy than either Mao or Deng possessed. Therefore, leaders are stuck in the dilemma of having to rely to a greater extent on the PLA's support, and as a result they encounter challenges and difficulties establishing effective control over the PLA. Whether the top political leader can effectively control the PLA has a pivotal impact on the degree to which he can trust and have confidence in the military leadership, which in turn determines his proclivity to consider the PLA's positions. If the top leader is able to establish effective control over the PLA, and therefore trusts the PLA to serve his interests, he will treat the PLA as one of his strongest power bases, and the PLA will thereby gain access to and influence over the top leader. Conversely, when the top leader is unable to establish effective control over the military, he will treat it as a threat and will attempt to shrink its direct influence as much as he can. In such circumstances, the PLA is most likely to use its power to take an

indirect approach to counter an undesirable policy or stall the implementation of such a policy.

This study does not offer a unicausal explanation of the PLA's influence in the policy-making process. The PLA and the Party maintain a greatly diminished but nonetheless interdependent relationship (the "symbiosis" model and the "conditional compliance" model), while having to address constant differences and frictions. The Party relies on the PLA's monopoly on violence and coercive force to maintain its grip on power. As power centers continue to multiply and China's system increasingly pluralizes, the PLA's support is a necessary condition for any of the Party's top leaders in the post-Deng era to consolidate his political power. Yet on the other hand, as the PLA becomes increasingly professional and further differentiates itself from the Party, its officer corps agrees that progressive changes and fundamental reforms are necessary in order to maintain China's social stability. Thus, while the Party, continuously fragmenting, needs the PLA more than ever, the PLA has a different sense of urgency regarding how fast China's systematic reforms should be carried out in order to ensure the country's stability and sustainability of this stability. Many senior commanders recognize the country's biggest challenge lies in maintaining internal stability, and until this problem is adequately solved, they feel that the PLA should focus on modernization and limit its external missions. The Party largely shares the final goal of reforms and sustainable stability, but has not acted as fast as the PLA would like.

The "Power" or "factional politics" model has assumed the sources of the political dynamics of China's civil-military relations come from conflicts within the Party, with the PLA being a part of different factions within the Party. The "professionalism" model

has assumed that conflicts between the Party and the PLA contribute to how civil-military relations are shaped in China. Both models can partially explain the PLA's influence in the policy-making process. The "factional politics" model cannot be completely abandoned when examining China's Party-military relations, since the appointment of the PLA's leadership and top political appointees is still dominated by the web of personal loyalties and personalistic politics. On the other hand, professionalization, institutionalized through hard requirements regarding age, education, and rotations, is still the dominant criteria for officer promotion, especially at the lower levels (below the army-grade or *junji*), which greatly limits the degree to which the civilian leadership can interfere in personnel decisions. There are certainly exceptions to this trend of professionalization. Political interference, however, is increasingly risky since it is more likely to expose the appointees and their patrons to public criticism.

In order to assess the PLA's influence in a policy process, this dissertation employs three lenses: the PLA's "mindset" (drivers), the Party-military relationship, and the bureaucratic process in which the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system (MFA) compete and cooperate with each other.

This dissertation first analyzes the PLA's "mindset," which determines its identity, posture, policy preferences, and motivation to engage in the foreign and security policy-making process. The PLA is a military force in transition, with dynamics that could greatly impact the likelihood that it will intervene in or refrain from China's foreign and security policy-making. Despite its loss of prestige due to its primary role in the Tiananmen Incident of 1989, this study finds that the PLA is the largest organized interest group that supports China's economic and political reform agenda, aside from

China's rising middle class. The PLA's political orientation of being "progressive moderates" in China's domestic politics, as well as its "dual missions," have contributed greatly to its "inward-oriented personality." In the policy-making arena, the PLA's "inward-oriented personality" equates with it prioritizing its internal mission over its external one, and exercising restraint and caution rather than assertiveness during security frictions with other countries. The PLA's traditional focus on its internal mission, however, is increasingly counter-balanced by its outward-looking strategy, driven by China's core interest in continuing its modernization and globalization, as well as the challenges posed by the revolution in military affairs (RMA).

This study then examines two other sets of dynamics, namely the tension between professionalization and politicization, and the rise of inter-service rivalry.

Professionalization creates mixed results in driving the PLA to intervene in or refrain from foreign and security policies: continuous professionalization helps the PLA further internalize the principle of "the military only managing military affairs," and therefore it is inclined to stay out of civilian politics; on the other hand, professionalization makes budgetary politics more important to the military than ever. These dynamics make the PLA increasingly defer to civilian authority, but at the same time make it potentially more budget-conscious and welcoming to continuous limited but militarized frictions.

This dissertation then examines the context in which the PLA has operated as a participant in Chinese politics (the Party-military relationship). What are the parameters and factors affecting the realm of overall political influence in which the PLA has operated? The central question is the balance of Party-military relations, which include: the top Party leader's reliance on the PLA's support; and the top leader's effective control

over the PLA. The analysis is divided into two distinct eras – Deng’s era and the post-Deng era – since Deng’s control over the military as well as the military’s allegiance to Deng is qualitatively different than any other point since Deng stepped down as China’s top leader. This study finds that despite the military’s relatively greater institutionalized representation in the Party-dominated power structure, under Deng it generally had minimal influence in foreign and security policies. In the post-Deng era, the military’s influence depends on whether the top leader can establish effective control over and therefore place his trust in the PLA.

Finally, how do the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system interact with each other during debates over policies, and when they disagree with each other who wins and under what conditions? “Policy process structure” refers to the structural conditions in policy making, which decides both the parameters of the PLA’s influence in the policy process, as well as the advantages and disadvantages the PLA has when interacting with relevant government agencies and private actors. The section on bargaining between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system examines these entities’ respective bureaucratic cultures, differences in policy positions, and their contrasting organizational strength and internal coherence. It also looks at the rules of the game in bureaucratic bargaining, namely the advantage of entry points into the policy process, strong allies, particularly strong motivation, and public opinion that supports one’s position.

This dissertation utilizes three case studies in order to examine the PLA’s influence in foreign and security policy-making:

- I. *China’s 1979 Border War with Vietnam: The Decision to Fight*

II. *Timetable Strategy and China's Taiwan Policy Following the 1995-96
Taiwan Strait Crisis*

III. *The Rise Of the South China Sea Dispute (2009-12): Bureaucratic
Bargaining In The Internet Age*

The reasons to choose the above three case studies are as follows: first, these three case studies fell into the periods of three different top leaders, namely Deng, Jiang and Hu. Second, the first and second case studies concerned “high” policies, and the third case is mostly about a “low” policy, to which rules of bureaucratic bargaining applied. Specifically, the first case study, on the Sino-Vietnamese War, sheds light on the decision-making process during Deng’s era. This case is particularly useful because it is the last war of significant magnitude the PLA fought, and is generally given less attention than China’s role in the Korean War or China’s border war with India. The case studies on Taiwan policy and the South China Sea examine China’s foreign and security policy-making after Deng, when rule by a strongman had subsided and the PLA’s relationship with the top leaders had significantly changed in nature. The analysis of Taiwan policy immediately following the 1995-96 Taiwan Straits crisis reveals how China’s foreign and security policy-making system functions when one of China’s core interests is at stake and when the military is most motivated to intervene in the decision-making process. Moreover, it is a significant event in that the military and civilian actors took very different positions. The third case explores the most likely source of friction in the coming years between China and a number of regional countries, and even more significantly between it and the United States. It is also a case study that provides a look

into a number of new actors that are emerging to drive systemic change in China's policy-making process.

Terminology and Alternative Approaches

As this dissertation studies the PLA's role in China's foreign and security policy-making process, it is essential to define the subject of this study, investigate the alternatives, and examine the measurement and methodology employed. There is no consensus among scholars on how to interpret and define *influence*, or alternatively "role" or "autonomy." As Richard Betts recognized, influence is one of "the most important and most elusive concepts in the study of politics."²⁵ Edward Banfield and Thomas Dickson provide a broad definition of "influence," defining it as the "ability to get others to act, think, or feel as one intends."²⁶ Constantine Danopoulos and Cynthia Ann Watson provide another definition of "influence," positing that the military exerts "influence" through "substantial and purposeful involvement in the making and allocating of wealth and of social and political value."²⁷ Richard Betts provides a narrower and more manageable definition of influence, which he determines is "causing decision makers to do something they probably would not have done otherwise."²⁸ This study adopts an even narrower definition of the PLA's influence on policy. The PLA's influence is defined as its ability to produce a policy outcome that would otherwise not have emerged, which it achieves through a combination of inducing, persuading, or coercing others to act and think in the way the PLA desires.

Alternative Subject to Study – Autonomy

One could make the argument that “autonomy,” which is more clearly defined in the literature, should replace “influence” as the object of this study. Autonomy is primarily conceptualized as an attribute of an individual person, and refers to the independence and authenticity of the desires that move one to act in the first place, as opposed to choices made due to coercion.²⁹ Many scholars argue that autonomy requires independence of both will and action, which means awareness of one’s values and identity, as well as one’s competence or action.³⁰ Thus, when “a person has autonomy (it) is that he does not simply react to his environment and other influences, but actively shapes his behavior in the context of them.”³¹ A prominent branch of scholarship on state autonomy emphasizes two conditions: autonomous preferences that require both differentiation and coherence; and the ability to translate its preferences into authoritative actions.³²

The literature that explores bureaucratic autonomy primarily has three strands: The first and most dominant strand defines autonomy as the extent to which agencies can implement outcomes that diverge from the preferred policies of their principals. This formal principal-agent approach finds that greater policy uncertainty on the part of political principals leads to greater delegation to bureaucrats.³³ Another useful prediction, the “ally principle,” holds that the extent of delegation will generally increase as conflict over preferences decreases.³⁴

The second strand, based on historical case studies and exemplified by David Carpenter’s work, emphasizes the process of preference formation, primarily with respect to the ability of agencies to shift their principals’ preferences, which the principal-agent approach misses. This approach identifies three necessary conditions for bureaucratic

autonomy: *political differentiation* (requires that an agency's preferences be irreducible); *organizational capacity* (allows agencies to engage in policy experimentation and innovation and to translate their preferences into effective actions); and *legitimacy* (dictates that an agency must convince a diverse network of citizens and political leaders of its unique capability and conduct a crosscutting "program coalition" in support of the agency and its policies). Whether an agency achieves differentiation and capacity depends greatly on the agency's bureaucratic culture.³⁵

A third major strand of literature on bureaucratic autonomy emphasizes the multidimensional nature of autonomy by examining the relationship among bureaucratic agencies and departmental ministers in European parliamentary systems. This branch argues that agencies with low policy autonomy may have discretion only over (sub)processes and procedures prescribed by political principals. Agencies with greater policy autonomy are able to select the policy instruments used to implement the policy, as well as the quantity and quality of the goods and services delivered.³⁶

Influence, as the subject of this study, does share many similarities with Carpenter's definition of autonomy – "independent policymaking power." The PLA's autonomy, as defined by its level of resources, capacity to implement policies, and operational freedom, is one of the ways through which it exerts influence. Autonomy is both a source of and a way that the PLA can exert its influence. Influence shares all three of autonomy's necessary conditions; political differentiation, unique organizational capacities, and political legitimacy.³⁷ Political differentiation, or in other words the formation of the PLA's distinct corporate interest, is a byproduct of the PLA's professionalization, and a starting point for the PLA to exert influence over policy.

Without distinct interests and goals, how could the PLA have the motivation to influence policy? The PLA has unique organizational capacities, which stem from its responsibility to act as the Party's security guarantor, supply military intelligence, provide military opinions, and play the deterrent role in management of any security crisis. Given its origin as a revolutionary army, the PLA deeply cares about its legitimacy among the public, which is one of the variables that determine whether the PLA will intervene in or stay out of certain policy debates.

This study forgoes autonomy and instead focuses on influence because autonomy fails to capture the deliberateness of the intent and effects of conscious bargaining and maneuvering to change policy outcomes to the direction that the PLA desires. This study focuses not only on how the PLA preserves its independence and freedom of action in policy deliberations and implementation, but also on how the PLA bargains and changes other actors' behavior. If this study had chosen "autonomy" as the main subject for investigation, it would have had to divert more of its research focus toward the PLA's own evolution. As such, it would not be able to devote as much attention to the dynamic and interactive Party-military relationship and the bureaucratic bargaining process, which are as important, if not more so, in explaining the PLA's role in China's foreign and security policy-making. Finally, "autonomy," if employed in the more narrowly but also more commonly interpreted sense of "independence or freedom or self-governing," may distort this study's main conclusions.

Categorization of Influence

This study divides the military's influence in foreign and security policy into two categories: *direct influence* and *relative power*. The PLA exerts *direct influence* over the policy-making process by encapsulating and explicitly expressing its formal institutional opinion directly to the decision-making bodies or the top Party leader. Such influence is mostly visible with regard to policies that the top Party leader personally oversees, or relations and crises with such strategic significance that the Party's collective decision-making bodies need to choose a course of action. The PLA's *direct influence* primarily results from the PLA's position within the Party-military relationship.

The PLA's *relative power* can be generated through multiple means. For instance, the PLA can attain relative power through bureaucratic bargaining. Additionally, the PLA can use its resources and capacity, for example by providing or limiting certain information and access, in order to frame the debate or shape preferences in the policy circle or the public domain and therefore establish/revise the basis for official decision-making.³⁸ The PLA can also exercise operational autonomy, which results in a change of the facts on the ground and therefore the context in which a decision must be made.³⁹ Finally, the PLA can deliberately or unintentionally stall a policy's implementation by refusing to carry out orders or creating difficulties that prevent cooperation or consultation with other policy actors (*ni zuo ni de, wo gan wo de*). The source of the PLA's *relative power* comes from the PLA's bureaucratic and organizational capacity and military prerogatives (military autonomy), but often results from the top Party leader's lack of effective control over the military.

Alternative Categorization of Influence

M. Taylor Fravel has thus far provided the most convincing alternative way of categorizing influence. Fravel identified two types of influence that the PLA potentially exerts over policy: *capturing influence* and *bureaucratic influence*.⁴⁰ Fravel defined “capturing influence” as influence “through lobbying or independent action outside existing bureaucratic channels” and “bureaucratic influence” as “the PLA help(ing) to shape the content of a given policy through lobbying or independent action.”⁴¹ Fravel asserts that the key difference between these two types of influence is that “in the bureaucratic view the PLA is only one of many actors that provide input and the final decision is taken by the party-state.”⁴²

Fravel’s categorization of influence, however, is incomplete because he neglects the fact that, in the context of foreign and security policy-making, policy preference is primarily a function of power. It is very rare for PLA officers to expose themselves to political risks by trying to “capture” the leadership for the sake of “policy.” If any individual PLA officer lobbies on an issue outside of bureaucratic channels, he does so to gain political power. In other words, officers will advocate a particular policy position because such a position enhances their political power. There are certainly exceptions to this rule, but senior PLA officers generally will not sacrifice their individual political power for a particular foreign or security policy.

It is also hard to differentiate lobbying through “inside” bureaucratic channels from “outside existing bureaucratic channels,” or individual lobbying from bureaucratic influence. It does not matter whether a CMC Vice Chairman speaks during a Leading Small Group meeting or in a personal consultative phone call with the Party’s top leader. When the CMC Vice Chairman speaks on policies, regardless of the forum, he has

substantial, if not complete, support from the PLA. Bureaucratic influence is more visible to outsiders because multiple actors may make public remarks or take visible actions, while intra-Party bargaining takes place mostly behind closed doors. The fact that bureaucratic influence is more discernible does not mean bureaucratic influence is the primary venue that actors use to change policy outcomes. Neither does it allow one to comfortably rule out the PLA's "capturing influence," as defined by Fravel.

Nonetheless, institutional interests, or bureaucratic influence as Fravel defines it, do exist since bureaucracies or institutions have fixed identities, cultures, and policy preferences, which are "sticky" and less liable to change. Policy-makers in bureaucracies, including the PLA, behave like interest groups that defend previous policy positions. Part of personal political power comes from bureaucratic capacity or superiority. Thus, by defending their bureaucratic or institutional interests, heads of bureaucracies, either from the PLA or a particular service within the PLA, are also attempting to maximize their political power. Relative power, as it is used in this study, refers not only to the PLA's direct bureaucratic influence and its resistance to policies under a weak top leader, but also describes the power discrepancy between the PLA and other bureaucracies.

Theoretical Foundation and Literature Review

This dissertation's findings are relevant to and augment previous studies on civil-military relations in China, Party-military relations in Communist countries, and the military's influence in politics.

Studies of Civil-Military Relations and Policy-Making in China

This section first summarizes the existing theoretical models on China's civil-military relations, then examines the literature on the PLA's role in China's foreign and national security policy, before ending with a brief introduction on the application of the "bargaining" or "fragmented authoritarianism" model for explaining China's policy-making milieu.

Several theoretical models have been advanced in the study of China's civil-military relations: the "power" model (also called factional politics), symbiosis, professionalism, and conditional compliance. These models provide insights into various aspects of China's civil-military relations, and are largely complementary to each other.

William W. Whitson and William L. Parish first developed the "power" or "factional politics" model for looking at China's civil-military relations, while Michael Swaine, Lynn White, and Cheng Li have subsequently further refined this framework.⁴³ Additionally, Andrew Nathan and Lowell Dittmer first presented this model in its more generic form to analyze Chinese domestic politics.⁴⁴ The "power" model generally attempts to interpret Chinese politics through the angle of informal dynamics. Their inquiries concentrated on "policy disputes, factional bases, and power contests" among major leaders, as Miller summarized.⁴⁵ The "power" model assumes that policies are evaluated in terms of individual or factional interests. Some subsequently borrowed this model to examine China's civil-military relations. One of the most representative efforts was a study Michael Swaine conducted in 1992, in which he examined personal backgrounds and complex networks largely based on the Field Army system. A series of analyses by Cheng Li and Lynn White, however, weakened Swaine's conclusion by positing that professionalization and regional reshuffles had brought military factions

based on the field army system to an end. Instead, Li and White, through extensive biographical analysis, found that educational and professional backgrounds served as the new basis for factions in the PLA. In general, the “power” model has inherent difficulties explaining when factional interests will outweigh policy preferences, institutional interests, and the equalizing effects of professionalization. The thesis of the “power” model, regarding the Party leadership’s personalistic power base within the PLA, has some remaining explanatory power when studying officer promotions and power struggles in the PLA officer corps. For instance, this model helps explain Jiang Zemin’s promotion of General Xu Caihou, and General Xu’s subsequent resistance to Hu Jintao’s control.

Prior to the 1990s, the “symbiosis” model was the dominant framework used to explain military and Party elites’ dual identity or the “revolving door” between military and nonmilitary posts. Amos Perlmutter and William LeoGrande argued that China’s Party-military relationship had remained essentially symbiotic, and therefore military and political elites had had low levels of differentiation based on their earlier careers as revolutionary soldiers. David Shambaugh, Jeremy Paltiel, Ellis Joffe, and Fang Zhu further advanced this model by introducing what Bullard coined the “interlocking directorate.”⁴⁶ These analysts viewed political intervention as an expression of the military’s loyalty to the Party. Joffe recognized the PLA’s influence in China’s policy-making, which he attributed to the military’s prestige and the symbiosis of the revolutionary soldiers with the Party. At the same time, he predicted the weakening of this symbiotic relationship. While recognizing the value of the symbiosis model to explain historical Party-military relations, Shambaugh argued that there would be an

inevitable differentiation between the Party and military elites, which would allow the Party to exert tighter control over the PLA.

The “professionalism” model, as articulated by Harlan Jencks, Ellis Joffe, Paul Godwin, and Michael Swaine, identifies professionalism as the “unifying and motivating force” for the officer corps.⁴⁷ This model predicts that the PLA will align itself with and provide political support for the leadership that is “most responsive to its professional interest” and its policy positions.⁴⁸ Proponents of this model generally object to Samuel Huntington’s subjective control thesis that precludes political involvement by a professional military. Among the scholars in this group, Joffe was the most unequivocal in arguing that the PLA had differentiated itself from the Party and was reluctant to intervene in politics because of this differentiation. According to Joffe, the PLA intervened in politics “because Mao or Deng had ordered it,” and was “not driven by internal motives or ambitions.” Rather, “senior commanders, who foresaw the dangers,” opposed each political intervention.⁴⁹ As the PLA modernizes and becomes more differentiated from the Party in terms of “interests, functions and outlook,” the distinction will become even deeper and the PLA will be preoccupied by military affairs.⁵⁰

In the “conditional compliance” model, James Mulvenon, You Ji, and Ellis Joffe posited that the Party-military relationship is a process of bargaining and balancing, or a relationship of “give and take,” which was made possible only after the political strongman was gone.⁵¹ According to these dynamics, political elites seek soldiers’ obedience and support, and in return the PLA looks to further its institutional interest, by bargaining for an increased budget, greater autonomy in military affairs, and a role in specific foreign policy areas. The PLA’s professionalization and the Party’s

discouragement of the PLA's political involvement, as well as the increased institutionalization of succession politics, will simultaneously bolster the Party's ability to control the military and the military's autonomy, according to You Ji.⁵² Political elites and the PLA, however, may face a more conflictual relationship when their interests collide.

Although models of China's civil-military relationship are useful for understanding the context in which the PLA seeks to influence policy-making, most of these writings do not directly address how, under what circumstances, and to what effect the PLA has shaped the policy-making process. Scholarly research often concentrates on one or two aspects of the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making, and findings are mostly presented in journal articles and edited volumes, with the exception of Michael Swaine's book, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*.

Earlier work analyzing the differentiation of the PLA's policy positions from civilian elites concentrated on the question of whether the PLA ever had a position on policies. William Whitson's assertion in 1974 that interorganizational disagreements have often been accompanied by intraorganizational disputes gave credence to the doubts and questions about the PLA's cohesiveness as an organization.⁵³ As a result, scholarly research tended not to focus on the level of the PLA's influence, what kind of influence it exerted, or how it exercised its influence.

An exception to this general trend was a bold 1977 monograph by Thomas Gottlieb. Building on the work of Whitson, Brown, and Lieberthal, Gottlieb applied the "factional politics" model to explore the civil-military divide over the evaluation of the

international situation that resulted in the Sino-Soviet-American strategic triangle (1966-69).⁵⁴ Gottlieb identified three distinct foreign policy groups: the Moderates under Zhou Enlai, the Military under Lin Biao, and the Radicals under the Jiang Qing Clique. According to Gottlieb, the moderates, under Zhou and the MFA, consistently “led the movement to expose the dangers inherent in the Soviet military build-up,” while the military and the radicals “concentrated on dramatizing the potential threat of the United States.”⁵⁵ Mao did not give his unconditional support to any of these individual groups. By the Ninth Party Congress in 1969, however, the civilian groups (both the moderates and the radicals) realized that the military was threatening the Party’s rule and control and agreed to oppose “military dominance in policymaking, even if for different reasons.”⁵⁶ Gottlieb cautioned against “fitting the policymaker to the policy,” since “there is no evidence that the PLA as an organization uniformly supported such strategic recommendations,” despite the fact that “some PLA leaders did publicly advocate the military strategy.”⁵⁷ Gottlieb’s general thesis that factions will fight for power through struggles over policies remains valid. Yet his specific conclusion that the radicals and the PLA colluded against the moderate faction is questionable because the radicals mistrusted and attacked the PLA in the 1960s and 1970s, which, with a moderate and progressive political disposition, sided more with the moderates.⁵⁸

Gerald Segal’s 1984 paper on the PLA’s influence on policies updated and reinforced Whitson’s powerful warning against treating the PLA as an organization. Segal reaffirmed his doubts about the “unified PLA point of view” on foreign policy.⁵⁹ Segal concluded that the PLA had few opportunities to become involved in the foreign policy process, and even if the PLA was involved in the foreign policy process, “it would

be too divided” to take a unified position. Furthermore, according to Segal, the PLA did not debate with civilian leaders or institutions, even over major issues related to the PLA’s mission such as the degree of professionalism versus politicization, size of the defense budget, or purchases of foreign military armaments.⁶⁰

Challengers to Whitson’s assertion came along during the mid-1990s, as the PLA continuously differentiated itself from the Party through a combination of professionalization and the closure of the “revolving door” between military and nonmilitary posts. With the passing of revolutionary leaders, the symbiotic relationship between the PLA and political elites started to break down. Yet, arguably, the PLA and the Party are still inherently interdependent.

John Garver concluded that the PLA did act as an interest group and intervened in the policy process in order to harden China’s policy position toward the U.S. and Taiwan.⁶¹ Garver asserted that the PLA does not have to be “a unitary, monolithic actor, or that it always act as a group” in order to be identified as an interest group.⁶² As evidence of his proposition that the PLA acted as an interest group, Garver pointed to the PLA and MFA’s differences over arms exports, maritime disputes, and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the PLA’s intensified lobbying effort on Taiwan policy from 1992-94. Garver’s sources mostly came from Hong Kong-based news sources with dubious credibility. Nonetheless, his overall argument that the PLA did act as an interest group has merit because it captured the basic characteristics of the policy differences between the PLA and the MFA and the PLA’s efforts to push its own agenda. However, his argument that the PLA’s more assertive foreign policy preferences reflect “a more nationalistic institutional culture of the PLA” is

not sufficiently evidenced and explained. This facet of his argument lacks theoretical coherence and is contradicted by empirical evidence, such as the fact that the PLA took a moderate position toward China's dispute with Japan regarding WWII history.⁶³

In *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking*, Michael Swaine provided the most comprehensive and authoritative account of the PLA's organizational structure and how it exerts influence during the formulation of China's foreign and security policies, by leveraging both formal, systemic channels, and informal and personalistic ones.⁶⁴ Swaine divided China's national security policy into four distinct but closely related sub-arenas: (1) national strategic objectives; (2) foreign policy; (3) defense policy; and (4) strategic research, analysis, and intelligence. Swaine argued that the military's positions on specific foreign policy issues were not determined by the CMC as a body, much less by the PLA organs below the CMC. According to Swaine, in the late-1990s the PLA did not play a central role in foreign policy, as many foreign policy decisions received only sporadic guidance from even the FALSG or the PBSC, which were operating largely on "automatic pilot," under the control of various relevant subordinate ministries. He predicted that the absence of a single dominant leader like Deng Xiaoping would in the future lead to greater military challenges to critical elements of China's foreign policy and "lengthy deadlocks or messy compromises acceptable to no organization, civilian or military."⁶⁵ Swaine did mention a few instances in which the PLA intervened in foreign policy, such as the Yinhe Incident. He did not, however, provide details regarding how the PLA carried out such interventions.

Swaine's series of studies published in 2012 reinforced the conclusions he drew in 1996, namely that many aspects of the PLA's role during political-military crises are

either dimly understood or entirely unknown to outside observers, especially at senior levels.⁶⁶ Swaine argued that at lower levels of China's crisis decision-making system, PLA officers and analysts play important roles as providers of intelligence and analysis, overseers of certain aspects of crisis management, and creators of operational plans, while senior officers interact with civilian leaders in a collaborative and consultant manner through institutionalized channels.⁶⁷ Yet Swaine also pointed out that little is known regarding the level and type of influence these low-level individuals and their organizations exert on crisis decision-making.

Whitson's factional model started to lose relevance with the rise and subsequent dominance of the bureaucratic politics model, developed by Graham T. Allison and Morton Halperin, and enhanced and applied to China by David M. Lampton (1987, 1992), Michel Oksenberg (1988), and Kenneth Lieberthal (1988, 1992, 2004).⁶⁸ The field of China Studies experienced a theoretical paradigm shift as China experienced fundamental political and societal changes after Mao's passing. Following Mao's death, the PLA itself, its political participation, Party-military relations, and the policy-making process all changed. After Deng initiated the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978, Western scholars recognized this monumental transition in the Chinese policy-making process and the systematic change China as a whole was undergoing. Lampton, Oksenberg, and Lieberthal, through a series of ground-breaking publications, introduced the "bargaining" or "fragmented authoritarianism" model. This framework explained why, contrary to popular belief, China's top leaders do not fully control the policy-making process, and organizational interests lead to competition and debates throughout the process.⁶⁹

The “bargaining” or “fragmented authoritarianism” paradigm, continuously updated along various dimensions, has not been superseded in explanatory power by alternative paradigms, even though it was developed nearly three decades ago.⁷⁰ Scholars who devised this model, however, initially recognized its limitations, as it was constructed based on studies of investment projects, and therefore “reflects research primarily on economic decision making.”⁷¹ Since China’s political system is far less institutionalized at the highest levels of the Party, where decisions on foreign and security policies are made, Lieberthal conceded that this model might be inadequate to analyze foreign and security policy-making.⁷²

David M. Lampton’s edited volume, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000*, overcame this recognized limitation of the “bargaining” or “fragmented authoritarianism” model. This volume has thus far provided the most updated, comprehensive, and first-rate analyses of the PLA’s influence in the policy process, with notable contributions by Michael Swaine on Taiwan policy-making, Bates Gill on arms control, and Tai Ming Cheung on the CMC’s structure. While emphasizing professionalization, corporate pluralization, decentralization, and globalization as the dominant trends leading to the transformation of China’s policy-making, Lampton revealed the obstacles that China’s policy-makers face: “more constrained paramount leaders, more limited bureaucracies, and a society that has progressively more space within which to operate.”⁷³

In the same volume, Swaine concluded that at the height of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, the PLA interacted with, but did “not dictate policy regarding Taiwan” to the civilian leadership.”⁷⁴ The PLA not only does not dictate China’s Taiwan policy, but also

does not control any other policies, including those surrounding sensitive territorial issues. Furthermore, according to Swaine, the PLA leadership does not develop and present positions on overall grand strategy toward Taiwan. Rather, China's Taiwan policy-making process has become increasingly bureaucratic, pragmatic, and consensus-oriented.⁷⁵

In a chapter in this edited volume on China's policy-making in the nonproliferation and arms control arena, Bates Gill argued that China's internal debates on these issues are split roughly along "military" (the PLA and defense-industrial community) and "political" lines. This "contentious process," which led to a bureaucratic reorganization that greatly weakened the Commission on Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) and strengthened the PLA General Armament Department (GAD), inevitably led to China's "two steps forward, one step back" behavior.

Finally, in this volume Tai Ming Cheung studied the Central Military Commission's (CMC) structure, workings, and responsibilities under Jiang Zemin's rule.⁷⁶ His chapter explained interesting interactions between the CMC and the civilian foreign policy actors on the Taiwan issue up to 1995. Cheung concluded that the PLA's role in the mainstream foreign policy arena had diminished and its ability to be heard at the very top levels of the political leadership cannot be taken for granted, except during major crises.⁷⁷ He argued that the military decision-making process is increasingly institutionalized and bureaucratic, and in most cases personal factors are no longer of great significance.

Cabestan's 2009 article supported the conclusion that the PLA's influence in China's foreign policy process has diminished. He argued that the addition of decision-making centers has required increased coordination between the three categories of foreign and security policy decision-makers: diplomats, merchants, and soldiers. China's bureaucratic systems (*xi tong*), however, are still separated along traditional lines.⁷⁸

Based on often well-sourced and interesting PLA writings, You Ji concluded in his 2014 study that the PLA has maintained a civil-military consensus on "war aversion." As You puts it, "no other action can undermine China's rise more effectively than a war initiated by itself; and a war may threaten the CCP's hold on power if it goes terribly wrong."⁷⁹ The post-symbiosis rules of the game have been well-observed and, no matter how reluctant the PLA is in some cases, the PLA "seldom challenges civilian decisions."⁸⁰ You's general conclusions are logical, but his case studies, such as the 2007 ASAT test, are less convincing. He argued that the MFA stayed silent for 12 days following China's ASAT test because its spokesman was probably too junior to make spontaneous comments on the test, but this does not explain the MFA's silence. If Wen Jiabao and Li Keqiang were aware of the test, as You argued, why did they stay silent as well?⁸¹ When actors in China take so long to respond to such a controversial event, which attracted fierce international criticism, it is reasonable to conclude that this is often a result of bureaucratic deadlock due to internal disagreements.

M. Taylor Fravel's 2011 paper on the PLA and China's national security policy-making is the biggest contribution, both in its policy conclusions and in its discussion about methodology and measurement challenges, which were less discussed and explored in previous studies on the same topic. By delving into China's responses to territorial

disputes, a policy area Fravel contributed to most in his book *Stong Borders, Secure Nation*,⁸² Fravel concluded, “the PLA has not played a significant role influencing the initiation of China’s territorial disputes.”⁸³ Consistent with You’s conclusion, Fravel asserted China’s recent assertiveness in the South and East China Seas reflects a consensus between the Party and the military. Fravel found little evidence in his study to support the view that “the PLA has escalated these disputes against the wishes of top leaders.”⁸⁴ Regarding the analytical challenges, Fravel made a subtle but very insightful observation: the absence of the PLA playing a visible role in China’s approach to a particular issue does *not* necessarily mean that the PLA did not play a role in influencing China’s policy on that issue.⁸⁵

Studies of Party-Military Relations in Communist Countries

The study of civil-military relations in states governed by un-representative regimes has produced a voluminous literature.⁸⁶ Within this strand, the study of civil-military relations in Communist countries, with a particular focus on the Soviet Union, has spawned extensive models and theorems, most noticeably the Party-military conflict model (Kolkowicz 1967), the institutional congruence model (Odom 1978), and the participatory model (Colton 1978).

Roman Kolkowicz saw Party-military relations in the Soviet Union as adversarial in nature, and presented a picture of lasting conflict between civilian and military elites due to divergent values, orientations, and interests. He argued that the Soviet military operated according to a professional ethic of autonomy. Rather than executing previously agreed upon policies, the Soviet military employed a variety of organizational tactics to

modify policies it did not wholly agree with. The Party saw the military as a potential challenger to its monopoly on power and therefore strived to impose control over the military through political indoctrination and institutionalized monitoring. Meanwhile, the military tried to blunt the Party's control and acquire professional autonomy, self-respect, and a bigger budget.⁸⁷ Therefore, in this zero-sum contest for power, the Party viewed the military's attempt to strengthen its influence as fundamentally destabilizing. Kolkowicz's thesis was criticized for its tendency to engage in overgeneralization,⁸⁸ by examining the fates of individuals (mainly Marshal Zhukov, who Khrushchev unseated in 1957), and self-contradiction, as he analyzed the "Stalingrad group" of military officers who were closely associated with and subsequently favored by Khrushchev.⁸⁹

William E. Odom contradicted Kolkowicz's thesis by concluding that the Party-military relationship in the Soviet Union was typified by "congruence, not conflict."⁹⁰ According to Odom, the Party and the military had a symbiotic rather than an adversarial relationship. Odom believed that the Soviet military behaved like its modern Western counterparts, as its military professionalism precluded any politically significant intervention. Soviet military officers were bureaucratic executors of the Party's will, and on a majority of issues the military and Party were in agreement. The military's influence, therefore, was broad but shallow, touching on a wide variety of issues but not acting as the decisive voice, as civilian and military leaders concurred on all principles and differed only over the best instruments to use to achieve those principles. Odom, as a U.S. military officer himself, was criticized for failing to account for the contribution of the Soviet military's professionalism to its officers' mentality and conduct distinct from the

Party, and his tendency to overstate the congruence of values as well as the uniformity of commitment within the Party to the military's priorities.⁹¹

Timothy J. Colton and others described a balanced Party-military relationship in the Soviet Union, in which neither side attained absolute domination, but both accepted the Party's sovereign power.⁹² Put differently, the Party-military distinction was clear, though the boundary might be permeable. While rejecting the notion that the relationship between the Party and the military was a zero-sum game, Colton found Soviet officers to be active bargainers and participants in "military-specific decisions – but not, as a rule, in decisions concerning societal choice and supreme power – on the basis of their professional expertise."⁹³ As a result, Soviet defense policies were the result of "extended bargaining and political maneuvering among a variety of interested institutions."⁹⁴

All three models listed above took the Soviet Party-military relationship as the main subject of their analysis, though their discussions also touched on the Soviet military's role within this relationship. These discussions, to a certain extent, provide a framework that can help explain the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policies. The findings of this dissertation echo Colton's model. On the one hand, both conflict and congruence of these institutions' larger values are ingredients of China's Party-military relationship. The Party-military relationship is conflictual in that the PLA has increasingly separated itself from the Party by strengthening its corporate interest, proposing policy prescriptions based on its interests, and executing policies with operational autonomy. This distinctiveness in orientation and interests, as well as the military's autonomy, constitutes the basis of the PLA's professionalism as well as the starting point of its purposeful exertion of influence over policies. The Party-military

relationship is also conflictual in the sense that the Party's fragmentation will inevitably creep into the military sphere, which will create the problem of who in the Party commands the gun. The PLA and the Party share the basic goals of protecting social stability and ensuring economic prosperity, and both recognize the necessity of reforms to achieve these objectives, although they might prioritize these goals differently. On the other hand, while the construct of Party-military relations delineates the overall boundary of the PLA's power in policies, the PLA's bargaining and interactions with the civilian bureaucratic system greatly shape the policy outcomes.

Studies of the Military's Influence in Foreign and National Security Policy

It is hard to lump all the literature on the military's influence in foreign and national security policy together, despite the different types of political regime and the civil-military relations in which it exists. However, it is useful to look at how this problem is tackled in different political settings.

With regard to mature democratic polities, Samuel Huntington's formulation of subjective control and objective control, the "normal theory of civil-military relations" as Eliot Cohen has termed it,⁹⁵ still stands as the benchmark theory for evaluating the military's influence in policies. Richard Betts, as well as Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, and Lawrence J. Korb, have offered differing explanations of the mechanisms by which the U.S. military attained its influence in foreign and national security policy-making.

This line of inquiry started with Harold Dwight Lasswell, who cautioned in the early 1940s that the existence of a sustained external threat could magnify the military's

role and turn democracies into garrison states.⁹⁶ Louis Smith made one of the first serious attempts to map the rise of the military's influence in American foreign policy after the end of World War II. WWII fundamentally changed the U.S. Military's role in the formulation of foreign and national security policies, and, to a large extent, how the military related to civilian elites. The military became the dominant governmental agency in the formulation of foreign policy.⁹⁷ The Cold War further enhanced the U.S. Military's role in foreign policy. Writing during the height of the Soviet threat, Smith saw no danger of undue military influence. Instead, Smith urged coordinated national security and foreign policies, which should clearly state the military's roles, functions, and missions, rather than leaving a policy vacuum that would allow the military to determine policies.⁹⁸ Burton M. Sapin and Richard C. Snyder argued the military, which was not attuned to mainstream values, became a pervasive and pernicious influence in American foreign policy. Sapin and Snyder, however, did not analyze why the U.S. military had become so influential.⁹⁹

Huntington, like Smith, did not see the struggle for civilian control over the military as being between the federal government and the military, but rather as a struggle between Congress and the executive branch, which resulted in *subjective control* over the military. This created opportunities for the military to play the executive and legislative branches against each other in order to pursue its desired policies.¹⁰⁰ Huntington advocated *objective control*, which kept the military focused on its military tasks and limited its political role to only providing advice. On the other hand, once the politician sets the goal, the soldier is free to determine how to best achieve it and civilians should not interfere with the military's judgment. According to Huntington, allowing

military professionals autonomy within their own realm minimizes the danger that the military will intervene in politics by “rendering them politically sterile and neutral.”¹⁰¹ *Subjective control*, the opposite of *objective control*, denies the existence of an independent sphere of purely military imperatives and “presupposes military participation in politics,” while allowing civilians to maximize their power by “civilianizing the military” – promoting senior military officers on the basis of their political beliefs.¹⁰² Huntington’s normative theory has been criticized for various reasons. Eliot Cohen rejected the notion that political ends and military means could be clearly separated and cited cases in which political commanders interfered in “purely military” plans during times of war.¹⁰³

Richard Betts, in his book *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, examined only the post-WWII cases in which the U.S. military used force.¹⁰⁴ His study is particularly helpful, as it attempted to tackle a research question similar to the one posed in this dissertation, namely: In the U.S. president’s decision on whether to use force, how has the military’s influence, relative to that of civilian advisers, varied since WWII? Betts defines influence as *causing decision makers to do something they probably would not have done otherwise*. He differentiates between direct and indirect influence. Direct influence flows from formal and explicit recommendations or control of operations, while indirect influence is exerted when soldiers attempt to control the framing of civilian decisions and limit their options through its monopoly on information.

Betts concluded that disagreement between the military and civilians was much more likely when considering the amount of force and the mode of implementation, rather than whether to commit American forces at all. In neither of the wars fought by the

U.S. between 1945 and 1975, nor during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, did the civilian leadership cave to the military's demands. In decisions on whether to commit American armed forces, Betts found that military advisers were usually internally divided, and the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff held views that were virtually identical to the dominant civilian attitude more than half the time. Regarding decisions on whether to escalate a conflict, no military adviser was less aggressive than the major civilian officials. According to Betts, soldiers have exerted the greatest leverage over decisions on whether to intervene during instances when they vetoed it. The U.S. military's influence was highest when it was direct and negative. The military's level of influence then proceeds in descending order: indirect and negative; indirect and positive; and direct and positive. Betts's study concluded that the evidence does not support the stereotype of belligerent generals and admirals versus a pacific civilian establishment.¹⁰⁵ The U.S. military, according to Betts, values control over operational command and tactics most, and then access to the president and autonomy over its internal organization and operations, more than direct influence over policy decisions.

Jordan, Taylor, and Korb dedicate a chapter in their book *American National Security* to exploring the military's role in the U.S. national security policy process.¹⁰⁶ Prior to WWII, it was only in wartime circumstances that the military significantly influenced the formation of national policy. For instance, the military's influence in the policy-making process was evident during the occupation of the Philippines immediately after the Spanish-American War. In WWII, the necessities of war and the importance of logistical support and security in areas behind the front lines drove the services and Operations Division (OPD) of the War Department's general staff to play a leading role

in developing war termination and postwar occupation policies. After WWII, the initiative in policymaking shifted away from the military establishment and back to the State Department. Compared with WWII, during the Korean War the theater commander's autonomy to prosecute the war was significantly curtailed, as evidenced by General Douglas MacArthur's firing. The U.S. military was nonetheless given the mission of conducting diplomatic negotiations to end the war, which further deepened the military's involvement in national policy-making.

Jordan, Taylor, and Korb concluded the military's increased resources, size, and presence led to the expansion of its influence on the formulation and execution of national security policy. These authors, unlike Betts, believe access matters for the military. Informal meetings between senior military officers and presidents formed an independent channel through which the military could influence presidents without the secretary of defense interjecting his views. Following WWII, during international crises U.S. presidents in general actively sought the counsel of experienced military commanders who understood political objectives and the strategic realities on the ground. These authors evaluate the military's influence by looking at its representation in formal institutions, the diplomatic missions it is tasked with, the overall structure of the national security apparatus, and the advisory role that military officials play for presidents.¹⁰⁷ President Eisenhower, due to his previous role as a five-star general and Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, accepted minimal military advice. Since the Kennedy years, however, retired officers have gained influence by serving as the military representative to the president. During the 1960s, the military significantly influenced U.S. policy toward Vietnam, but its influence remained subordinate to civilian views. In

the 1970s and 1980s, military officers continued to influence policy debates through their significant participation in various interdepartmental groups within the national security council (NSC) system and on the NSC staff.

Despite the plethora of literature on civil-military relations in authoritarian and Communist countries, the scholarly work that directly tackles the issue of the military's influence in foreign and national security policy-making in these countries is relatively scarce.

In the book *Civil-Military Relations under Gorbachev: The Struggle over National Security*, Thomas Nichols and Theodore Karasik conclude that Soviet civilian and military leaders conferred and cooperated on a host of prosaic issues, but constantly struggled over military doctrine and national security policy. Thus, the authors conclude, "the issue is not policy; it is power."¹⁰⁸ The Party's contested authority in military affairs had been a chronic and more fundamental problem in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev's failure to dominate the military in the 1960s and Brezhnev's unwillingness to oppose the military's priorities in the 1970s heightened the Party leadership's anxiety over its ability to control the military. Under Gorbachev, the Ministry of Defense and General Staff were divided over his "new thinking," which in the military realm translated to reasonable sufficiency and thus limits on the military's growth. Between 1987 and 1990, almost every major defense post in the Soviet Union had experienced significant turnover. However, tensions between Gorbachev's inner circle and the military were so significant that even this personnel turnover did not solve the problem, since officers taking over senior positions were as inflexible as their predecessors. Gorbachev tried to enlarge the circle of those who could weigh in on defense policymaking by bringing in outside

opinions. Until the military's monopoly on defense policy-making was broken, the military possessed the means and the will to subvert crucial aspects of military reform, and it frequently showed an inclination to do so, even when such actions directly subverted the Party line.¹⁰⁹

Dale R. Herspring, in his book *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, focused on individual decision-makers (in this case high-ranking military officers, namely the Chief of the General Staff and Defense Minister), their personalities, backgrounds, and relationships, in order to understand the Soviet military leadership's role in the national security decision-making process.¹¹⁰ The Soviet Union's historical record is littered with examples of Soviet military officers having major influence both within the armed forces and across the broader political spectrum. For example, Marshal Georgii Zhukov had considerable influence both within the military and on the evolution of Soviet military politics. Under most circumstances, the Soviet defense minister was the primary intermediary between civilians and the military. He represented the interests of the high command to the political leadership and in turn ensured that the political leadership's decisions were effectively implemented. If the defense minister was a civilian and lacked either the technical or the bureaucratic expertise necessary to keep the General Staff in line, he could not be effective. The General Staff was the Soviet Union's most important military structure. It was far more powerful than its American equivalent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If the chief of the General Staff strongly disagreed with the political leadership's views and policies, and the latter was not strong enough to enforce its policies, a situation might develop similar to that of the early 1980s, when Ogarkov openly argued with the political leadership over the nature of East-West relations.

Herspring's book is particularly useful in explaining the Soviet officer corps' sense of reality and their views, differentiated from the Party, about how the Soviet Union should have been run. Sergei Akhromeyev, as Gorbachev's Chief of the General Staff, was deeply concerned over the country's failing economy and was willing to agree to a lower defense budget. He also recognized the value of arms control agreements to Soviet security, despite the fact that such agreements could potentially harm the military's parochial institutional interests.

Ilhan Uzgel, in a study of the Turkish military's role in the formation and execution of Turkish foreign policy between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, concluded that its role in the making of foreign policy is directly linked with its place and role in domestic politics and society.¹¹¹ With strong credentials in domestic politics, the Turkish military enhanced its autonomy and expanded its role in foreign policy, at a time when the military declared that internal threats (i.e., political Islam and ethnic secessionism) took precedence over external threats.

Methodology, Measurement, and Analytical Challenges

The following section examines the methodology this study employs, as well as measurement and analytical challenges this study encountered.

Methodology

Broadly speaking, the dynamics of the PLA's mindset, its internal debates, the PLA's own decision-making system, dissent and differences in policy positions, and agenda promoting behavior form a dynamic process that is largely categorized by

scholars studying Chinese foreign policy as a “black box.” Though speculation abounds, the inquiry into the PLA’s influence in China’s foreign and security policy-making has so far not been rigorously or systematically examined, because this black box is so impenetrable. China’s military system has remained closed not only to Western scholars, but also to most Chinese scholars. Moreover, interactions between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system are largely either undocumented or classified. The answers to the questions posed in this study are mostly buried in people’s minds, and are not found in documents or books. The challenge that China’s current political environment presents to scholars is compounded by the problem that official memoirs often contain “selected truths,” which does not challenge the official history or cause embarrassment to the government and the military.¹¹² A designated writing team sanctioned by the CMC mostly wrote the memoirs of senior military leaders. For example, General Su Yu’s memoir was written four years after his death in 1984.¹¹³ Su’s memoir curiously did not discuss his accomplishments as a senior commander during the successful Huaihai Battle, due to the tense relationship between Su Yu and Deng Xiaoping and their competing claims regarding who actually commanded the Huaihai Campaign (November 1948 – January 1949).

As a result of the dearth of archives, documentation, and written communications regarding the PLA’s thinking, Party-military relations, and the PLA’s bargaining with other policy actors, scholars drew quick conclusions that were often based on questionable assumptions, without serious investigation into the falsifiability of their conclusions. Additionally, speculation was often put forward as fact.¹¹⁴ The PLA’s bargaining behavior remains the least understood area of China Studies. Recognizing this

problem, some scholars stick to studying official statements, *PLA Daily* editorials, and published PLA writings, and treat the PLA as a unified voice in complete sync with the Party. Some focus on studying the Chinese government's organizational charts, without examining the explanatory power of these sources. For instance, how do PLA officers deal with their civilian interlocutors? Links that exist on organizational charts do not necessarily mean efficient communication between two bureaucracies. Organizational charts certainly cannot reveal how differences in bureaucratic cultures, or the relative power of bureaucracies and personalities, facilitate or obstruct interagency interactions.

Formal power structures represent prestige and influence in most but not all cases, as evidenced by Yang Baibing's Politburo membership after the 14th Party Congress in 1992. Actions and words are more discernible than intentions. Also, this approach of only focusing on "knowns" – written and public statements – will lead to an accurate reading of the façade, but an erroneous or seriously flawed understanding of the actual nature and dynamics of the PLA's evolution, Party-military relations, the PLA's role in foreign and security policies, and more broadly the trajectory of China's foreign policy. Consequently, ill-advised policy prescriptions may be given, which are often more dangerous than inaction. Therefore, a balance has to be struck between pure reliance on the "knowns" and exploration of the "unknowns."

This study is based on more than 260 interviews conducted in China, which are complemented by memoirs, published personal accounts, secondary sources, and news and resources in the public domain. More than half of the interviews were conducted with active-duty and retired PLA officers, while the remaining discussions were with Chinese government officials, policy researchers in government think tanks and, to a lesser degree,

academics. Thanks to my opportunity as a pre-doctoral research fellow at the Brookings Institution in 2013-14, interviews with a few former U.S. government and military officials, American experts on China, and Western-based Chinese scholars are also included.

The vast majority of the over 130 active-duty and retired PLA officers interviewed participated in at least one aspect of the policy deliberations, debates, presentation, and implementation of at least one foreign or security policy in which the PLA played a role. The majority of these officers are between the ages of 30 and 65, although several officers over 65 were interviewed. Those interviewed possessed a military rank from colonel to lieutenant general at the time of interview (2011-14). Among the military interviewees, in terms of services, officers from the Second Artillery had the lowest representation, followed by those from the Air Force. A substantial number of these officers have known the author, who worked as a journalist in China beginning in the mid-1990s, and others had typically met the author multiple times. The interviews were conducted not with structured questionnaires, but rather would always cover questions related to the PLA's political orientation in domestic politics, its role in policy-making, and its interactions with other actors.

The study employs primarily qualitative case studies to assess the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policy-making. The case study approach is necessary because a comprehensive data approach is untenable, partly because of China's closed political environment and partly because of the natural discrepancy between words and motivation of any government or military. Process tracing is conducted for not only each of the three designated cases, but also for numerous smaller cases and used as

evidence to examine and assess the PLA's mindset, Party-Military relations, and the bureaucratic bargaining process.

Measurement

The inescapable analytical challenge for academic research is how to precisely define and measure abstract, nonmaterial, and non-quantifiable concepts. This dissertation attempts to assess the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policy-making from 1978-2012, and therefore looks to assess "*influence*," "*political reliance*," and "*effective control*," all of which are not only abstract, but are also elusive and subjective.

There is no easy way to solve this measurement puzzle. The PLA's *influence* can be assessed by observing the difference between what the PLA advocates prior to a policy decision and the policy outputs, as well as the initial policy preferences of the Party's top leader and the civilian foreign affairs system, and then comparing these preferences to the policy outputs. In certain instances, direct evidence of the PLA's preferences may not be readily apparent, in which case one must examine the options that best fit the PLA's interests under the specific circumstances.

The PLA's influence under the construct of the Party-military relationship is determined by two components: the Party leader's *political reliance* on the PLA, and the leader's *effective control* over the PLA. When measuring *political reliance*, it is more manageable to examine the power landscape and rules of political bargaining in China's top-level intra-Party politics. Therefore, variables that affect the degree to which a leader needs the PLA's political support include: the stability, multiplicity, and authoritativeness

of the leaders' own power bases; coherence and fragmentation of the political opposition within and outside the Party; and crisis level or stakes (intense inter-Party rivalries and rifts that may split the Party, leadership succession, prosecution of major political leaders, and events that threaten the country's overall national or political stability). These variables can be broken down into the following questions: 1. How important is the PLA's political support to the political/policy positioning in intra-Party politics at the leadership level? In other words, will the PLA's political support tip the balance during the process of political bargaining? 2. At the national level, is there a grave security threat that has made the use or threat of use of force necessary and imminent?

Theoretical Challenges

Analysts who precisely define "influence," a great challenge in and of itself, would face a variety of theoretical challenges because "influence" has fuzzy edges. First, policy outcomes may not be produced immediately. Revisions of some policies may take considerable time and a complicated process to muddle. Should the PLA still claim credit if its desired policy outcome under its influence takes a significant time, possibly a decade and even decades, to emerge? Second, one should also be aware that values and goals, consistently desired and pushed by the PLA, could be internalized subconsciously by political elites and the public, without a clear link pointing to the PLA's influence. Influence is more discernible in areas where bargaining behaviors are illustrated by public statements and evidenced by tangible actions. However, it would be flawed to believe the discernible "influence" is then greater. Third, influence over policymaking and policy implementation, which Lampton categorized as "policy output" (formulated

policy), and the “policy outcome” (actual effects of implemented policy), are sometimes hard to differentiate.¹¹⁵ As this study is concerned mostly with policymaking, it should be acknowledged that policy implementation cannot be organically separated from policymaking, since with respect to foreign and security policies, those who make the policies often have to implement them. Also, disagreements between bureaucracies regarding particular policies are often carried into the implementation stage, which may lead to a review, refinement, and sometimes reversion of policies. Therefore, policymaking often bleeds into policy implementation.

The fourth challenge for this study is the lumping together of “foreign and security policy,” since diplomacy and security policies are hard to cleanly separate.¹¹⁶ Defense policy is often the military component of foreign policy, and each could be the extension of the other when serving the same goal. That said, it should be recognized that the PLA has different levels of motivation to intervene in different foreign policy areas. For example, it probably has little interest in China’s climate change and clean energy negotiations, but has immense interest and important stakes in how to secure China’s energy supply, since this has implications for the PLA’s doctrine, defense posture, and military planning.

Fifth, although this study will assess the PLA’s level of influence in a particular era, it should be recognized that in different policy areas the PLA is motivated by different degrees to exert influence, and the influence it exerts in one particular policy area, for example territorial disputes, does not necessarily translate into influence in another policy area, for example, arms control. In other words, the PLA’s influence varies across the different policy areas.

Finally, the level of influence the PLA exerts should be distinguished from the policy outcome. The PLA's influence could in fact be exemplified in pushing China's foreign policy both towards and away from a hawkish or dovish position. A high level of influence for the PLA does not necessarily mean a military run amok. By the same logic, a lesser degree of influence for the PLA should not necessarily be equated with a peaceful China. The top civilian leadership and foreign policy makers, as well as the military, can be either hawks or doves.

¹ David M. Lampton provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the “*si hua*” or four transformations – professionalization, corporate pluralization, decentralization, and globalization – that characterize the changes in the Chinese foreign and national security policy-making process. Lampton's characterizations could also be applied in the more general picture of Chinese domestic politics, especially the trilateral relations among the Party, the PLA, and the State/government. See David M. Lampton, “China's Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process: Is it Changing, and Does It Matter?” in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 1-36.

² Although the attention, interest, and management style of each top leader varies, this argument regarding the top leader's limited time and energy on foreign and security policy could be based on Deng Xiaoping's quote in 1984. When Deng spoke to a meeting, he acknowledged that he only did two things that year, including the opening-up of four coastal cities as Special Economic Zones and handling the Hong Kong issue. Deng said, “As for other things (in policy), they are all done by other people” (*qita de shi, doushi bieren gande*). Although the real number of policies that needed Deng's intervention must have exceeded these two major issues, Deng's own words indicate that a top leader's attention to policies is limited and has to be limited to high-stakes policy issues that often concern economic development and sovereignty. See Li Gang, “Deng Xiaoping and the Successful Settlement of the Hong Kong Issue: Interview with Zhou Nan, Former Vice Foreign Minister,” *dang de wenxian*, Issue 4 (2007); Zong Daoyi (ed.), *Zhou Nan Koushu: Yao Xiang Dang Nian Yu Shan Guan Jin* (Oral History By Zhou Nan) (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 2007), pp. 303-45.

³ Rear Admiral Chen Weiwen and Li Shuwen, the former Vice Commander of the South China Sea Fleet, provided this explanation in separate interviews. See Han Yong, “Past Events about Liu Huaqing: Always Charging and Breaking Through, Never Tarnishing Uniforms,” *zhongguo xinwen zhouban* (*Chinese Newsweek*), May 28, 2013, available at: <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2013-05-28/105127245385.shtml>; “Interview with Ever Victorious Rear Admiral Chen Weiwen, Commander of Six Clashes on Seas with Vietnam over Spratlys: China Must Develop Aircraft Carriers,” *xiandai jianchuan* (*Modern Ships*), May 20, 2012, available at: <http://mil.huanqiu.com/china/2012-05/2737442.html>.

⁴ James Fearon argued that in crises that take place in public, a government might well have to pay a domestic political price if it backs down in the dispute. In such circumstances, it would be less likely to make threats that it did not intend to follow through on than if it could bluff with impunity; those threats it did make would therefore be taken more seriously. This audience cost mechanism, as it was called, thus allowed states to make credible commitments in this kind of conflict. And indeed the claim was that this mechanism was of fundamental importance — that it played a “crucial role” in “generating the costs that enable states to learn” during a crisis. See James Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review*, 88 (3) (September 1994), pp. 576-9.

⁵ You Ji, “The PLA and Diplomacy: Unraveling Myths about the Military Role in Foreign Policy Making,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23 (86) (March 2014), p. 237.

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- ⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, "How We Would Fight China," *The Atlantic*, June 2005 Issue, available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2005/06/how-we-would-fight-china/303959/>; John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3 (4) (2010), pp. 381-96.
- ⁷ David Lague, "A Mystery in Beijing: Who Runs the Military?" *International Herald Tribune*, June 23, 2007; Jeremy Page, "China's Army Extends Sway; Other Nations Look Warily of Military's Influence on Foreign Policy," *Wall Street Journal* (Online), October 3, 2010; Edward Wong and Jonathan Ansfield, "Party Bristles at Military's Push for More Sway in China," *New York Times*, August 7, 2012, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/world/asia/chinas-military-seeks-more-sway-worrying-communist-party.html?_r=0; Joshua Kurlantzick, "After Deng: On China's Transformation," *The Nation*, October 17, 2011, available at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/163669/after-deng-chinas-transformation>.
- ⁸ Allan Collins concluded that the PLA's influence over the direction of China's foreign policy appears to have declined since the mid-1990s due to Deng Xiaoping's death and Jiang Zemin's consolidation of power. Allan Collins, "East Asia and the Pacific Rim: Japan and China" in Mark Webber and Michael Smith (eds.), *Foreign Policy in a Transformed World* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), pp.287-321.
- ⁹ James Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharp, 2001); Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's Foreign- and Security-policy Decision-making Processes under Hu Jintao," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 38 (3) (2009), pp. 63-97.
- ¹⁰ Michael D. Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior – Part Four: The Role of the Military in Foreign Crises," *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 37 (April 2012), available at: <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM37MS.pdf>.
- ¹¹ A. Doak Barnett, "The Making of Foreign Policy in China," *SAIS Papers in International Affairs*, 9 (1985); David M. Lampton, "Chinese Politics: The Bargaining Treadmill," *Issues & Studies*, 23 (3) (March 1987); David M. Lampton (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China – From Revolution Through Reform* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995); Carol Lee Hamrin and Suisheng Zhao (eds.), *Decision-making in Deng's China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995); Kenneth Lieberthal, "China's Governing System and Its Impact on environmental Policy Implementation," *China Environment Series* (1997); Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the empty fortress: China's search for security* (New York: Norton, 1997); Bo Kong, "Institutional Insecurity," *China Security* (Summer 2006), pp. 64–88; Andrew Mertha, "Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago (September 2007); Qi Zhou, "Organization, Structure and Image in the Making of Chinese Foreign Policy since the Early 1990s," Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2008; Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Lai Hongyi, *The Domestic Sources of China's Foreign Policy: Regimes, Leadership, Priorities and Process*, (London and New York: Routledge: 2010); David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014).
- ¹² John W. Lewis, Hua Di, and Litai Xue, "Beijing's Defense Establishment: Solving the Arms-Export Enigma," *International Security*, 15 (4) (Spring 1991); Michael D. Swaine and Donald P. Henry, *China: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy* (Santa Barbara, CA: Rand Corporation, 1995); David S. G. Goodman and Gerald Segal (eds.), *China Rising: Nationalism and Interdependence* (London: Routledge, 1997); James Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps: Trends and Implications*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Rand Corporation, 1997); Ming Zhang, *China's Changing Nuclear Posture: Reactions to the South Asian Nuclear Tests* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Evan S. Medeiros and Bates Gill, *Chinese Arms Exports: Policy, Players, and Process* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2000); Michael D. Swaine, "Understanding the Historical Record," in Michael D. Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle F. S. Cohen (eds.), *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), pp. 1-102; M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Linda Jacobson and Dean Knox. "New

Foreign Policy Actors in China,” SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Policy Paper no. 26 (September 2010).

¹³ Harvey Nelson, *The Chinese Military System: An Organizational Study of the Chinese People's Liberation Army* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977); Jonathan D. Pollack, *The Sino-Soviet Rivalry and the Chinese Security Debate* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1982); Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Michael D. Swaine, *The Military & Political Succession in China: Leadership, Institutions, Beliefs* (Santa Barbara, CA: Rand Corporation, 1992); Michael D. Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking* (Santa Barbara, CA: Rand Corporation, 1998); You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co., 1999); David M. Lampton (ed.), *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); James Mulvenon and Andrew N.D. Yang (eds.), *The People's Liberation Army as Organization* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 2002); David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); John W. Lewis and Litai Xue, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Nan Li (ed.), *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: The Transformation of the People's Liberation Army* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Xiaobing Li, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007); David M. Finkelstein and Kristen Gunnes (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China: Swimming in a New Sea* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2007).

¹⁴ Ellis Joffe, “Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect,” in David Shambaugh and Richard H. Yang (eds.), *China's Military in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 36.

¹⁵ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, p. 227.

¹⁷ Ellis Joffe, “Ruling China after Deng,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 11 (1) (Winter/Spring 1997), pp. 183-220; Joffe, “Party-Army Relations,” pp. 44-5; Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China*.

¹⁸ Geng Biao was transferred from the PLA to work in the MFA in the early 1950s and spent the following 20 years there serving as ambassador and vice foreign minister. By 1978, Geng became the Vice Prime Minister in charge of foreign affairs and defense industry. In January 1979, Geng became the Secretary General and member of Central Military Commission and then became Defense Minister in 1981.

¹⁹ David M. Lampton (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China*.

²⁰ For example, in 1985 General Hong Xuezhi named Zhao Nanqi to be his deputy and Zhao took the position of Deputy Director of the GLD after serving as Party Secretary of the provincial government of Jilin from 1978 to 1985. Zhao, a veteran of the Korean War who fought with Mao Zedong's son, Mao Anying, went back and forth between government and the PLA several times in his career until he landed in the GLD and was promoted to full general in 1988.

²¹ Michael Kiselycznyk and Phillip C. Saunders, “Civil-Military Relations in China: Assessing the PLA's Role in Elite Politics,” Institute for National Strategic Studies of National Defense University, *China Strategic Perspectives*, 2 (August 2010), p. 14.

²² Joffe, “Party-Army Relations,” p. 46.

²³ Bullard first examined the structural changes in China from 1960-84 by looking at institutional linkage in the political-military relationship, which Bullard summarized as the interlocking directorate. The interlocking directorate consists of interlocking roles between five institutions: Central Committee of the Party; military regions; military districts; province party committees, and provincial revolutionary committees or government organizations. See Mount R. Bullard, *China's Political-Military Evolution: the Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-1984* (Boulder: Westview, 1984), p. 5.

²⁴ In other cases in which the PLA attempted to express its opinion, segments of the PLA leadership dissented and worried that a ruptured relationship could damage China's military modernization programs as the Sino-Soviet split ruptured its relationship with Soviet Union. Lin Biao allegedly opposed the improvement of Sino-U.S. relations in the early 1970s. However, Lin's opinion was countered by other career PLA senior officers, including four marshals who came to the conclusion that China should improve relations with the United States. The four marshals were Ye Jianying (Vice Chairman of the CMC by April, 1969), Nie Rongzhen (Vice Chairman of the CMC from 1961 to 1988), Xu Xiangqian (Vice Chairman of

the CMC from 1959 to 1987), and Chen Yi (Vice Chairman of the CMC from 1959 to 1972 and Foreign Minister from 1958 to 1972). During his meeting with President Nixon on February 21, 1972, Mao was said to have publicly pointed to Lin Biao's opposition for China to improve its relationship with the U.S. and the West. Gottlieb believed that from Lin Biao's vantage point, as a military man not fully aware of the subtleties of international politics, an opening to the West might be read by Moscow as a new sign of China's deep, irreversible anti-Sovietism. See Thomas M. Gottlieb, *Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism and the Origins of the Strategic Triangle* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, November 1977); from the Chinese side, according to Zhang Ning's memoir (Lin Biao's daughter-in-law-to-be), Lin Biao privately was excited about the improvement of Sino-U.S. relations and expressed his desire to meet with President Nixon. See Zhang Ning, *Writing about Myself*, (Writer Press, August 1998), pp. 226-34.

²⁵ Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 5.

²⁶ Dickson defined Influence (I) as $I = A \rightarrow T:D (GA)$, which is read as "Influence equals Actor causes Target to make a Decision that is believed to contribute to a Goal desired by the Actor. See Thomas I. Dickson, Jr., "Military Influence in Government – Theoretical and Practical Aspects," *Air University Review*, May-June 1974; Edward C. Banfield, *Political Influence* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2007), Second Printing, p. 3.

²⁷ Constantine Panos Danopoulos and Cynthia Ann Watson (eds.), *The Political Role of the Military: An International Handbook* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. xii.

²⁸ Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, p. 5.

²⁹ Such conceptualization could be found in bioethics, gender studies, liberal theories of rights, liberty, and self-determination. For example, John Christman, "Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy," in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008 Edition); George Sher, *Beyond Neutrality: Perfectionism and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

³⁰ John Christman, *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 134.

³¹ Thomas May, *Autonomy, Authority and Moral Responsibility* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), p. 62.

³² Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in P.B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back in* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³³ David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran, "Administrative Procedures Information, and Agency Discretion," *American Journal of Political Science*, 38 (3) (1994), pp. 697-722; David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran, *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kathleen Brawn, "Political Control Versus Expertise: Congressional Choices about Administrative Procedures," *The American Political Science Review*, 89 (1) (1995), pp. 62-73.

³⁴ Another way to explain the ally principle is that all else equal, principals will rationally delegate more authority to agents (allies) who share their preferences. See Timothy Besley, *Principled Agents? The Political Economy of Good Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 98-123; Jacob E. Gersen and Adrian Vermeule, "Delegating to Enemies," *Columbia Law Review*, 112 (8) (2012), pp. 2193-4.

³⁵ Daniel Carpenter, *The Forging of Democratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

³⁶ Koen Verhoest, B. Guy Peters, Geert Bouckaert, and Bram Verschuere, "The Study of Organizational Autonomy: A Conceptual Review," *Public Administration and Development* 24 (2004), pp. 101-18.

³⁷ Daniel Carpenter's 2001 study of bureaucratic politics in late 19th- and early 20th-century America identifies three necessary conditions for bureaucratic autonomy in the context of a representative polity: political differentiation, unique organizational capacities, and political legitimacy. The object of Carpenter's study is "independent policymaking power." However, his study excludes the U.S. military and the U.S. Department of State. Daniel Carpenter, *The Forging of Democratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*.

³⁸ Huntington proposed three dimensions when examining civilian control situations: the level of professionalism, the ideology prevailing in society or the state, and the relative power of the military. When he defines relative power, Huntington focused only on the control of other people's behavior.

³⁹ Betts differentiated military influence in two forms: direct influence that flows from "formal and explicit recommendations or control of operations," and indirect influence that flows from "ways in which the soldiers may control the premises of civilian decision through monopoly of information or control of options." Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, p. 5. Direct influence in this dissertation is the same as the version Betts discussed. However, the concept of indirect influence employed in this dissertation differs from that of Betts in the sense that I believe indirect influence includes actions or inactions of the military that change the environment and therefore the basis for decision-making. This happens much less in the Western civil-military context. However, it is a factor that has to be examined under the framework of examining Chinese civil-military relations.

⁴⁰ M. Taylor Fravel, "The PLA and National Security Decisionmaking: Insights from China's Behavior in its Territorial Disputes," paper prepared for the 2013 CAPS-RAND-NDU Conference on the PLA, November 2011.

⁴¹ Fravel, "The PLA and National Security Decisionmaking," pp. 2-5.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ William W. Whitson, "The Field Army in Chinese Communist Politics," *China Quarterly*, 37 (1) (January-March 1969), pp. 1-30; William L. Parish Jr., "Factions in Chinese Military Politics," *China Quarterly*, 56 (4) (December 1973), pp. 667-99; Michael D. Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China: Leadership, Institutions, Beliefs* (Santa Barbara, CA: Rand Corporation, 1992), available at: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4254>; Cheng Li and Lynn White, "The Army in the Succession to Deng Xiaoping: Familiar Fealties and Technocratic Trends," *Asian Survey*, 33 (8) (August 1993), pp. 757-86.

⁴⁴ Andrew J. Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics," in Steffen W. Schmidt (ed.), *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977).

⁴⁵ H. Lyman Miller, "Politics Inside the Ring Road: Sources and Comparisons," in Carol Lee Hamrin and Suisheng Zhao (eds.), *Decision-making in Deng's China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 224.

⁴⁶ Mounte R. Bullard, *China's Political-Military Evolution: the Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-1984*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Ellis Joffe, "China's Politics-Shy Army Watches From the Wings," *New York Times*, August 6, 1992, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/06/opinion/06iht-edjo.html>.

⁴⁸ Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982); Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-1964* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1967); Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao*; Paul H. B. Godwin, *The Chinese Communist Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1988); Harry Harding, "The Role of the Military in Chinese Politics," in Victor C. Falkenheim (ed.), *Citizens and Groups in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1987); June Teufel Dreyer, "The Role of the Armed Forces in Contemporary China," in Edward A. Olsen and Stephen Jurika (eds.), *The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 42-3.

⁴⁹ Joffe, "Party-Army Relations," pp. 299-314.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ You Ji, "Jiang Zemin's Command of the Military," *The China Journal*, 45 (January, 2001), pp. 131-8; James C. Mulvenon, "China Conditional Compliance," in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 317-35.

⁵² You Ji, "Jiang Zemin's Command," pp. 131-8.

⁵³ William W. Whitson, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-1971* (New York: Praeger, 1974).

⁵⁴ See William W. Whitson, *Organizational Perspectives and Decision-making in the Chinese Communist High Command* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, March 1971); Whitson, *The Chinese High Command*; Roger Glenn Brown, "Chinese Politics and American Policy: A New Look at the Triangle,"

Foreign Policy, 23 (Summer 1976), pp. 3-23; Kenneth Lieberthal, "The Internal Political Scene," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1975, pp. 1-11.

⁵⁵ Thomas M. Gottlieb, *Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism and the Origins of the Strategic Triangle* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1977), pp. VII-X and 20-1.

⁵⁶ Gottlieb, *Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism*, pp. 2-5.

⁵⁷ Gottlieb, *Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism*, pp. 10-1.

⁵⁸ Numerous personal accounts of those who went through the Cultural Revolution can be found that support this thesis. The most systematic scholarly work is from Ding Kaiwen, Fang Zhu, and Ellis Joffe. See Ding Kaiwen, *The PLA and the Cultural Revolution* (New York, Mirror Books, 2013); Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China*; Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao*.

⁵⁹ Gerald Segal, "The Military as a Group in Chinese Politics," in David E. Goodman (ed.), *Groups and Politics in the People's Republic of China* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1984), p. 83.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ John W. Garver, "The PLA as an Interest Group in Chinese Foreign Policy," in C. Dennison Lane, Mark Weisenbloom and Dimon Liu (eds.), *Chinese Military Modernization* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996), pp. 246-282.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Garver, "The PLA as an Interest Group," p. 282.

⁶⁴ Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policy Making*; Michael D. Swaine, "The PLA in China's National Security Policy: Leaderships, Structures, Processes," in David Shambaugh and Richard H. Yang (eds.), *China's Military in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 96-129.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Michael D. Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior Part Four.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ See Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1971); Graham T. Allison and Morton Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics*, 24 (1972), pp. 40-79.

⁶⁹ David M. Lampton, "Chinese Politics: The Bargaining Treadmill"; Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes*; Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (Second Edition) (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004).

⁷⁰ For example, Andrew Mertha argues that even though the rules of the policy-making process are still captured by the fragmented authoritarianism framework, the process has become increasingly pluralized. That is, barriers to entry have been lowered, at least for certain non-governmental organizations and the media. See Andrew C. Mertha, "China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change."

⁷¹ Kenneth Lieberthal, "The 'fragmented authoritarianism' model and its limitations," in Kenneth Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (eds.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 12-9.

⁷² Ibid, pp. 1-30.

⁷³ See Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process" p. 28.

⁷⁴ See Swaine, "Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan," p. 335.

⁷⁵ Swaine, "Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan," pp. 319-27.

⁷⁶ Tai Ming Cheung, "The Influence of the Gun: China's Central Military Commission and Its Relationship with the Military, Party, and State Decision-Making Systems," in David M. Lampton (ed.), *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, pp. 61-90.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's Foreign- and Security-policy Decision-making Processes under Hu Jintao," pp. 63-97.

⁷⁹ You Ji, "The PLA and Diplomacy: Unraveling Myths about the Military Role in Foreign Policy Making," pp. 236-54.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 247.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 248.

⁸² M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*.

⁸³ M. Taylor Fravel, "The PLA and National Security Decisionmaking: Insights from China's Behavior in its Territorial Disputes," p. 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

⁸⁶ See Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962); Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977); Amos Perlmutter, *The military and Politics in Modern Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

⁸⁷ Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 11; Roman Kolkowicz, "The Military," in H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths (eds.), *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 131-69.

⁸⁸ Timothy J. Colton, another renowned expert on Soviet Party-military relations, made this criticism. See Timothy J. Colton and Thane Gustafson (eds.), *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 10-13.

⁸⁹ See Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*.

⁹⁰ William E. Odom, "The Party-Military Connection. A Critique," in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978); William E. Odom, "The Militarization of Soviet Society," *Problems of Communism*, 25 (September-October 1976), pp. 34-51.

⁹¹ Timothy J. Colton also made this criticism. See Timothy J. Colton and Thane Gustafson (eds.), *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, pp. 10-13.

⁹² See Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Timothy J. Colton, "The Party-Military Connection: A Participatory Model," in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, pp. 53-75; Edward L. Warner III, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics: An Institutional Analysis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977); Condoleezza Rice, "The Party, the Military, and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union," *World Politics*, 40 (October 1987), pp. 55-81.

⁹³ See Timothy J. Colton and Thane Gustafson (eds.), *Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, pp. 10-14.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

⁹⁵ See Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, 2002), pp. 225-48.

⁹⁶ Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 16.

⁹⁷ Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁹⁸ Louis Smith, *American Democracy and Military Power: A Study of Civil Control of the Military Power in the United States* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1951).

⁹⁹ Burton M. Sapin and Richard C. Snyder, *The Role of the Military in American Foreign Policy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1954).

¹⁰⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 144.

¹⁰¹ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 84.

¹⁰² Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 83.

¹⁰³ Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, pp. 3-14.

¹⁰⁴ Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*.

¹⁰⁵ Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, pp. 4-15.

¹⁰⁶ Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., and Lawrence J. Korb, "The role of the military in the national security policy process" in *American National Security: Policy and Process: Fourth Edition* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 164-88.

¹⁰⁷ The U.S. military exerted influence by having the head of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) serve the U.S. ambassador as the chief adviser on military affairs in diplomatic missions. Military influence on national policy also expanded within the structures that grew up around the National Security

Council (NSC), namely Interdepartmental Regional Groups (IRGs) and the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG).

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Nichols and Theodore Karasik, "Civil-Military Relations Under Gorbachev: The Struggle over National Security," in William C. Green and Theodore Karasik (eds.), *Gorbachev and His Generals: the Reform of Soviet Military Doctrine* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 29-39.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command 1967-1989: Personalities and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹¹¹ İlhan Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy: The Role of the Military in Turkish Foreign Policy," *The Turkish Yearbook*, XXXIV (2003), pp. 177-211.

¹¹² According to a regulation of General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), all books that reflect upon the work and lives of the "Party and State Leaders" have to strictly observe an application and approval procedure. "(The relevant) topic and manuscript, to be published by publishing press of the government ministries and departments, have to be checked and commented by the supervisory ministries and departments that oversee the publishing press, and then sent to the GAPP for approval. GAPP then has to send the topic and manuscript to relevant ministries and departments, including the Central Propaganda Department, Central Archive Research Office, Central Party History Research Office and Academy of Military Sciences of the PLA for assistance during the approval procedure. All above mentioned books have to obtain approval of the individual the book writes about before publishing." See Yang Meiju and Xu Yun, "Analysis of Chinese Leaders' Memoirs," *guoji xianqu daobao*, August, 27, 2013. The definition of "Party and State Leaders" is explained in detail in this dissertation in the section on "PLA Representation in the Secretariat and General Office memoirs" of the Appendix to Chapter Three. The memoirs of all PLA officers who belong to the category of "Party and State Leaders" are drafted by designated tasking forces assigned by the GPD, which normally initiates the topic, with the CMC's approval. Therefore, all official memoirs of Party and State leaders rarely discuss sensitive topics. Some, such as Yang Baibing, were denied the opportunity to write any memoir. Others declined to write their memoirs. Ye Xuanping, son of Marshal Ye Jianying, is one of those who declined to write a memoir because he believed that in order to be approved published memoirs had to be either utterly dishonest or omit important but embarrassing facts. *Interview with one subordinate who was close to Ye Xuanping*, Guangzhou, 2011. There is numerous evidence to support Ye's comment on official memoirs. For example, Luo Diandian, daughter of General Luo Ruiqing, and Zhang Sheng, son of General Zhang Aiping, wrote a series of short memoirs or books to reflect on the embarrassing details of General Chen Xilian, General Yang Chengwu, Deng Xiaoping, Ye Jianying, and Qian Xuesen (some were not named directly but could be easily analyzed and identified), which were not recorded in any official memoirs. See Luo Diandian, "Diandian Ji," *Dangdai*, Issues 4 and 5 (1998); Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars: Dialogues Between Two Generations of Soldiers and Record of Life of Zhang Aiping* (Beijing: zhong guo qing nian chu ban she, 2009).

¹¹³ General Su Yu's memoir was first published in 1988 under the title *Su Yu's War Memoir*, which did not discuss his commanding career during the Huaihai Campaign (November 1948 – January 1949). Before Su died, he repeatedly told his wife Chu Qing that he would neither read nor write about the Huaihai Campaign and would not watch any movie about it either, primarily because Deng claimed publicly that he commanded this campaign. See Ju Kai (Su Yu's secretary), "Su Yu and the Huaihai Campaign," *xiangchao magazine*, Issue 7 (2008), available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/85037/8294952.html>.

¹¹⁴ M. Taylor Fravel made a similar warning, stating, "assessments of the PLA's influence in national security decisionmaking are often based on conjecture or speculation, not facts." See M. Taylor Fravel, "The PLA and National Security Decisionmaking: Insights from China's Behavior in its Territorial Disputes," p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process," p. 11.

¹¹⁶ You Ji, "The PLA and Diplomacy," p. 237.

Chapter Two: The PLA's Mindset: Drivers Influencing the Military's Motivations

Introduction

When studying the PLA's influence on China's foreign and security policy-making, it is debatable whether the PLA is interested in exerting its influence on foreign policy at all. What drives and motivates the PLA to influence certain areas of China's foreign and security policy-making but not others? The multitude of foreign policy areas means that the PLA cannot be interested in every one of them, if it is indeed interested at all. Which policy areas is the PLA interested in, and which ones do they feel particularly strong about? Does the PLA have a unified voice, or is it at least capable of having a unified voice in foreign policy positioning?

In order to answer the above questions, I introduce the independent variable of "the PLA's mindset." By "the PLA's mindset," I refer to the PLA's identity, values, interests, and outlook that are developed based on its historic traditions, war experiences and legacies, military characteristics, internalization of societal changes and the ongoing transformation to adapt to challenges posed by Revolutions in Military Affairs (RMA). Second, the PLA's mindset is also molded by its unique decision-making style, which is based on its organizational structure, process, and the unique characteristics and patterns of military thinking. I expand on the first aspect of the PLA's identity in the section entitled *three dynamics*, and the second aspect in the sections, *how the PLA makes decisions* and *circumstances when the PLA won't consult*.

To summarize the nature and main characteristics of the PLA since 1978, I argue that the PLA is by and large a professional military, with peculiar, though diminishing, characteristics as a CCP-dominated army.¹ The Party demands the PLA's total subordination: the "gun," the instrument of violence at the Party's disposal, should not have a mind of its own. The PLA and the Party, two of the longest-standing and most powerful institutions in China whose fates have been intertwined since their inception, still share many core interests and goals. Even in Mao's era after 1949, the PLA arguably had a mindset distinctly different from the Party's. Since 1978, the PLA, as an institution, has been undergoing a dramatic transformation. Its "mentality," interests, and goals have been evolving according to its own trajectory and logic. The PLA's role in China's foreign policy-making process will depend to a large extent on where along the following three dimensions it is heading.

Three Dynamics Inside the PLA

Three sets of contrasting dynamics in the PLA's transformation will decide its motivation to intervene in the policy process: inward-oriented vs. outward-oriented mentality; professionalization vs. politicization; and unity vs. the rise of inter-service rivalries. The PLA's mentality demonstrates both consistency, much of which has been molded by its historical legacy and past experiences or habits, and a dynamic and ever-changing character that challenges its traditional thinking. The PLA is an institution in rapid transition, and its transformation is taking place within a complicated polity.

Dynamic One: Inward-oriented vs. Outward-oriented Mentality

To understand the PLA's "introverted personality" or its "inward-oriented mentality," one needs to go back to its history and traditions, and also look at its dual missions. The PLA was designed and built as a defensive force with the missions of maintaining both external and, probably more importantly, internal peace and stability. The dual nature of the PLA's missions has led to the Chinese military's dual "personality." In this sense, the PLA has both "inward-oriented" and "outward-oriented" tendencies.

The PLA has an inherently "inward-oriented personality" or mentality (*nei xiang xing*). The PLA traditionally sees itself as "children of the people" (*zi di bing*). This self-image exists not only because the majority of the first generation of the PLA officer corps were children of peasants, but also because it sees part of its legitimacy as coming from the recognition and acceptance of the people. The PLA's legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese people was a prerequisite for its military success during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the Civil War that followed.² In 1941-42, the Japanese army conducted five sweeping campaigns against China to "kill all, burn all, destroy all," which caused the CCP's Eighth Route Army to lose 100,000 soldiers due to casualties and desertion, and the population under the CCP's control to fall from 44 million to 25 million.³ The CCP, however, due to its popular support, was able to recruit local militias and armed peasants, thereby replenishing its ranks and allowing it to continue fighting.⁴ The success of Mao Zedong's guerrilla warfare was premised on receiving the support of the peasants living in rural areas – the "sea" in which the guerrillas needed to "swim."⁵ According to Mao, "without the constant and active support of the peasants... failure is inevitable."⁶ This self-image affects the military's self-prescribed role of being the

justified and responsible protector of the people and the state, which explains in domestic issues its tendency to support long-term political goals even at the expense of its own strength.⁷

The way in which the PLA involves itself in China's politics and policy-making process has a long history and tradition, which shapes the basic foundation of the PLA's mandate and missions. From its inception, the PLA has been bestowed with the mission of protecting and strengthening the CCP's hold on power, and thus due to its involvement in political affairs it is seen as "a peculiar armed force."⁸ The PLA looked over and protected the CCP as it attempted to seize power from the Kuomintang (KMT) before 1949. The majority of the PRC's first generation of political leaders were first assigned to important military posts before being promoted to prominent political positions.⁹ Thus, for the first generation of CCP leaders, without the requisite military credentials one could rarely enhance his political standing.

During the Mao era and a substantial part of the Deng era, the PLA was required to participate in Party politics and national policies, as this was considered part of fulfilling its mission. As Fang Zhu points out, "for the PLA officer corps, political participation was an expression of party loyalty, not a violation of military professionalism."¹⁰ Although peripheral aspects of the PLA's mission may change in response to China's internal and external threats and the nation's priorities, the foundation – participating in Party politics and national policies – remains the same and is rarely touched.

Since the PRC's founding, maintaining internal stability has always been an inherent part of the PLA's mission. After 1949, the PLA was tasked with resisting

invasion by China's foreign enemies and protecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity against such potential invasions, though Mao differed from the professionally-oriented officers with regard to which task was more important. Mao believed that the PLA was designated with diverse missions as "a fighting team, a work team, and a production team."¹¹ At the dawn of the PRC's establishment, Mao talked about transforming "the 2.1 million-strong field army into a work team" and stated "the 53,000 military cadres are not enough" for "the extremely vast new territory to be occupied" by the CCP.¹² As Chairman of the Party, Mao assigned these missions to the PLA. The PLA was seen as the organization that the government could call upon to complete a task whenever a civilian agency fell short, from forging government agencies, to increasing agricultural production, and to handling emigration to remote regions of China. Mao called upon the PLA during each grave crisis.¹³

Marshal Zhu De, the long-term Commander-in-Chief of the PLA and a professionally-oriented military leader, took a drastically different angle when talking about the PLA's missions in 1949 and 1950. Zhu clearly believed that China faced menacing external threats and defined the PLA's mission as resisting foreign aggression.¹⁴ Marshal Peng Dehuai, China's first Defense Minister and also a professional soldier, described the PLA's main missions during the post-1949 period as "liberating Taiwan and completing national reunification, maintaining domestic order, and defeating foreign invasions and protecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."¹⁵ Both marshals describe narrow visions of the PLA's missions, focusing on the military's role as security guard and "protector" against foreign invasion, which

stands in contrast with Mao's expansive vision of the PLA as having a role in agricultural production and governance.

The 1954 State Constitution articulated the principles that defined the PLA's missions, which were reiterated in the 1982 State Constitution (in effect despite several revisions), stating that the PLA "belongs to the people" and emphasizing its mission as security provider (both points were emphasized more in the 1954 Constitution than in the 1982 Constitution). The 1982 Constitution reiterated that the PLA "belongs to the people," but in addition to the role of providing security to China and its people, the PLA is urged to "participate in national construction" and "work hard to serve the people," probably because Deng intended to focus on economic development.¹⁶

In contrast, during the Hu Jintao era, the PLA's missions were redefined as the "three provides and one role," which unprecedentedly highlighted the PLA's position as a guarantor of the *Party's* rule and enlarged its mission to safeguarding China's national interests – a large portion of which are overseas – and ensuring "world peace."¹⁷ Thus, the PLA's internal mission has been consistently highlighted throughout the PRC's history, while in the 2000s its mission became both more narrowly defined and explicitly focused on protecting the Party's rule, and also increasingly centered on its external function. Past history and tradition, to a large extent, have molded the PLA's "personality" and its perception of dual missions.

"Inward-oriented" PLA: Characteristics and Political Orientation

A typical inward-oriented PLA officer believes that the military's internal mission is its primary mission; he/she is more concerned about safeguarding China's internal

stability and ensuring its economic modernization, and sees the need to undertake gradual but genuine political reform as long as stability can be maintained. With regard to foreign policy, a typical inward-oriented PLA officer is much more guarded on core territorial issues that China has traditionally defined as core interests, namely Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang; he/she likes to see international relations in black and white, in which China has consistently been victimized, looked down upon, and ganged up against, and the only way out of this predicament is for China to “take care of its own business” by sustainably strengthening its internal economic strength, political governance, and social development; and he/she does not believe that arms control agreements and multilateral cooperation/communication have any value. A typical inward-oriented PLA officer is not keen on developing military-to-military relations, is suspicious of the intentions of foreign militaries, and is hesitant about interactions with Western militaries for fear that the West will sow dissatisfaction and disunity inside the PLA, attempt to bring about “peaceful evolution,” and gather the PLA’s military intelligence. He/she often has little interest in learning foreign languages and distrusts those who are fluent in foreign languages.¹⁸ Those who have either real combat experience or the experience of being stationed for a significant period of time among combat troops who have been involved in extremely traumatic battles with foreign militaries tend to be inward-oriented.¹⁹

“Inward-oriented” PLA officers’ primary focus on internal problems stems from the PLA’s orientation as “progressive moderates” in domestic politics. A well-respected retired PLA general’s confession left a deep impression on me as I started my field research in 2011. Knowing him for over a decade, I asked him: “General, what is on your

mind lately?” I thought he would discuss the recent tensions in the East China Sea or on the Korean Peninsula but heard a surprising answer:

My pension. These days, I am really worried about my pension. China’s biggest problem lies in its house (domestic problems). Under Deng, China’s guideline was that “black cats or white cats, as long as they catch mice, are good cats.” Deng meant that it is good to get rich no matter what means one uses. Now, corruption runs rampant and power can be cashed out for, with the income gap widening drastically. Those in the second generation of the rich and powerful are filthy rich, though their wealth is obtained through illegal means. Therefore, unlike rich Americans reinvesting and expanding their enterprises, rich Chinese, worried about the illegality of the way they got rich, try to move their wealth abroad. Even if the Chinese government chooses not to hunt down the rich who accumulate wealth through illegal means, these people, insecure about their wealth, will try to send money abroad, which could trigger capital flight... With such problems and challenges simmering, economic and political reforms are continually kept on the backburner because of an overly hesitant leadership (under Hu). As a result, it is increasingly difficult to carry out these reforms, and the situation is made more difficult by China’s interest groups, which have become more entrenched. Against this backdrop, I indeed worry about my pension. Under these circumstances, how could China play chicken with the U.S.? On what basis can China play chicken with the U.S.?²⁰

This retired PLA officer’s worry was representative of the sense of grave crisis among the PLA officer corps.²¹ Despite the horrendous image of the PLA using live ammunition on unarmed student demonstrators in 1989, the PLA is the largest organized interest group in support of China’s economic and political reform agenda, aside from China’s rising middle class.²² There is a prevailing though unspoken consensus among the PLA officer corps that economic and political reforms are imperative for China’s stability. Put differently, stability is absolutely necessary for China, but according to many of the PLA officers such stability also has to be sustainable, which can only be obtained by reforming China’s political system.

The PLA is generally open to all approaches to reforms, as long as stability is maintained. The sense of grave crisis prevalent in the PLA officer corps deepens the differentiation of the PLA from the Party. In the revolutionary era (1921-49), the Party represented an advanced ideology and ignited hopes for a modern and strong China. Since 1978, as China moves toward economic modernization and social pluralization, the

Party has faced increasing challenges to its legitimacy from an empowered society that began to see how China lagged behind the long-demonized capitalist world both economically and politically. The existing political structures the Party dominated could not effectively solve the problem of systemic corruption and social injustice. The Party's crisis of legitimacy and authority in the 1980s was ameliorated by China's economic miracle. However, as China's society is increasingly empowered and its citizens become aware of their rights, the Party faces a delayed but probably more violent crisis if it chooses inaction.

Both the Party and the PLA have recognized this looming crisis. The PLA, however, differs from the Party over the direction and pace of political reform. PLA officers are open to a wide range of political reforms, as long as they meet one absolutely necessary condition: the maintenance of China's overall stability. The Party realizes it is faced with a crisis of governance and legitimacy, and therefore it recognizes that it must enact further political reforms, but it will still try to hold on to its power and unchallenged position in Chinese politics. The PLA officer corps has a deeper sense of crisis and urgency for reforms than the Party does, and does not believe the Party is moving quickly enough to enact reforms.

Stability is repeatedly raised as the primary concern during any discussion of political reform. As some PLA officers suggested, the CCP could start with intra-party competition and move to inter-party competition: to maintain stability but weed out corruption, all officials who wish to be put up for promotion would disclose their personal finances, while those who refuse financial disclosure could serve in their current positions until retirement, as a 2012 internal study conducted by the PLA suggested.²³

The “Singapore Model” is most frequently cited as the ideal model for China’s future political reform. Under such a scenario, China would maintain single-party rule under the CCP but would also have rule of law, efficiency, a clean government, social justice, property rights, and human rights. However, PLA officers are open to supporting more drastic political reforms, including electoral democratic reform, as long as stability is maintained and the new political system is sustainable in the long run. The PLA officers I interviewed are well aware of the importance and urgency of launching political reform. However, they are equally aware of the danger of undermining CCP rule during this process. As one senior PLA officer said, “China will die if (political) reform fails to proceed; but (the supremacy of) the Party will die if (political) reform proceeds (*bu gaige, wangguo; gaige, wangdang*).”

The tradeoff between preserving the CCP’s primacy or even survival and undertaking political reforms in order to bolster China’s fundamental stability is a profound dilemma the military has to face. However, it is clear that the PLA will side with the nation rather than the CCP if hard-pressed. As one senior PLA officer said, “the Party is so corrupt and the income gap in society is so large. Nine out of ten officials are corrupt. Almost all officials dredge for money wantonly. It is a matter of time until corruption kills the Party and the nation (if this is not stopped). By then, even the military cannot be kept from damage.”²⁴ That said, it would be utterly wrong to conclude that the PLA is likely to initiate a coup or support a rebellion to overthrow the CCP, as that would fundamentally contradict the PLA’s nature, tradition, and professionalism. It is reasonable to infer that the PLA would prefer to support a moderate, reform-minded top leader. Such a leader would have a politically progressive reform agenda, and would also

have the capacity to carry out his agenda while simultaneously maintaining stability and increasing prosperity. The PLA is less inclined to support a radical or conservative top leader who tries to strengthen the Party's control at all costs.

The PLA's political orientation of being progressive moderates in China's domestic politics comes from both the PLA's self-perceived image as "people's children" or protectors of the state, as explained above, and from the elitism deeply buried in the PLA officer corps. An active-duty senior military officer articulated the PLA's self-perceived role as "grown-up children who safeguard their parents' safety" as he said, "The PLA's mission is to protect China's security. China's security includes both internal security and external security. Therefore, (safeguarding) China's political stability and (ensuring) political system reform is part of the military's mission."²⁵

It is not rare for senior PLA officers to take a great interest in studying potential political reforms in China. General Liu Yazhou, Political Commissar of the PLA National Defense University, even quietly commissioned a study on the different possible paths of China's political reform before Xi Jinping officially took power as China's top leader. Xi favored such a study, expressed support for this task force, and encouraged it to present its findings to the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC).²⁶ This unpublished study concluded that China should introduce intra-Party competition and gradually transition to inter-Party competition. This study also recommended innovative measures for advancing governance reform while minimizing political instability by advocating that: all officials should report their assets to the government and could choose to return illegal assets to the government without retributions; and those who accurately report their assets would be allowed to proceed along the promotion track while those who refuse to do so would

retire from their positions within a given period.²⁷ General Liu Yuan, son of the former Chinese leader Liu Shaoqi, was also closely associated with progressive intellectuals such as Zhang Musheng, who supported China's political reforms but insisted on conducting such reforms while protecting the CCP's supremacy among all parties, as China officially has eight "democratic parties."²⁸ General Liu Yazhou and General Liu Yuan may disagree over how China should proceed along the path of political reform, but they have one conviction in common – China badly needs to push forward deep economic and political reforms.²⁹

Wang Yang, the former governor of Guangdong Province who became China's Vice Premier in 2013, has also been identified as one of the reform-minded senior government officials who have kept a very close relationship with the officer corps.³⁰ More importantly, PLA officers recognized that the most serious security threat China faces is systematic corruption caused by the lack of progress in political reform, which many worry will eventually topple the CCP and cause irreparable damage to Chinese society.³¹ However, they are dissatisfied with political leaders' inertia and inaction, growing interest groups that serve the privileged and the wealthy, rampant corruption, an increasingly wide income gap, and pervasive civil unrest. The PLA officer corps, however, does not favor radical destabilizing reforms such as those carried out by the Soviet Union under Gorbachev.

The Tiananmen Incident marked a drastic inflection point for the PLA. Seven generals, all first-generation military leaders including a former Defense Minister and former Chief of the General Staff, explicitly wrote to Deng to express their opposition to sending troops to Beijing.³² Current-duty commanders such as Maj. Gen. Xu Qinxian,

who led the renowned 38th Army, chose to defy direct orders and were eventually court-martialed.³³ Maj. Gen. Liu Liankun, the most senior PLA officer to defect to Taiwan and become an informant for Taiwanese intelligence, explained that one of his motives to defect was his disappointment with the fact that he could not help save Maj. Gen. Xu without sinking himself politically.

The 138 interviews I conducted with PLA officers indicate that these PLA officers are not in the PLA's minority. Rather, they represent the moderate and politically progressive majority of the PLA officer corps who could not and would not speak up on this topic but maintain a strong conviction on the necessity of reforming China's political system. The vast majority of PLA officers are steadfast supporters of China's *gradual* political reform, as they resist supporting abrupt and radical reforms, which they worry may destabilize China and ultimately work against the purpose of reform. Many of them believe a premature and ill-planned radical movement, such as the Tiananmen student demonstrations, though well-intentioned, would set back China's political reform for decades. Nonetheless, it would be a step too far to conclude that the PLA would instigate a rebellion to push forward the reform agenda or even support an attempt to overthrow the CCP. This would go against the PLA officers' professional instincts.

Having established that the majority of PLA officers are "progressive moderates" with regard to China's domestic politics, it is important to understand why this is so. First, the PLA's "progressive moderate" tendencies result from its elitism. As Roman Kolkowicz concludes, "an elitist value system" is a universal characteristic of most military establishments.³⁴ Elitism has been a trait of the PLA officer corps since 1949, despite the first-generation officers' low level of education, and the PLA's elitism

invariably increased with the specialization process. By 1949, most of the social and economic elites had fled to Taiwan with the KMT government. As a result, the most knowledgeable and competent personnel in the CCP, besides a small number of elites who remained after the KMT fled, were those who had been serving in the military and possessed managerial experience as a result of their fighting careers and interactions with peasants.

A large segment of China's elites joined the military and formed the core of the subsequent generations of the PLA officer corps, especially from the 1950s to the 1970s.³⁵ They were attracted to the PLA by the higher standard of living, higher social status and prestige and, most importantly, they wanted to avoid the hardships of the countryside and could be exempted from such hardships by joining the military. Because the military was one of the best-paid and most honorable vocations from the 1950s to the 1970s, that generation's elites joined the military.³⁶

Another important phenomenon in the 1950s-1970s was that children and grandchildren of the first generation of PLA officers typically wanted to join the military. Compared to those with a non-military background, these children and grandchildren of the first generation of the PLA officers were more easily recruited because of their parents' connections. This segment of PLA officers was a much smaller slice of the officer corps but was often promoted much faster than those from other backgrounds, and often benefited from opportunities to pursue further education and training, and even the ability to study overseas. These people, who grew up in a socially secluded military family compound (*jundui dayuan*) and in a relatively well-off environment, often demonstrated strong personalities and tended to be more independent-thinking, outspoken,

rebellious, confident, and even arrogant. The PLA officers whose family members were also in the PLA, and who grew up in a military environment, also tended to be proponents of gradual political reforms because of a firmer sense of ownership of China.³⁷ General Liu Yazhou wrote: “In China, the military is a force for reforms...The majority of the real elites and the real reformers are in the military.”³⁸

Additionally, PLA officers’ detachment from general society contributes to their realistic assessment of China’s development. PLA officers were often able to maintain a higher standard of living and greater social privileges than average civilians throughout the 1950s-1970s.³⁹ That exclusivity and separation from society (military officers often lived apart from the general society and their living space and working space were guarded and therefore separated from civilian society) provided PLA officers with a relatively detached position to view China’s catastrophic radicalism under Mao from a more critical perspective.⁴⁰ The protection ensured by physical separation and a privileged social status, paired with its mission of safeguarding the nation, possibly made PLA officers less “contaminated” by society’s radical shifts, thereby instilling a more moderate mentality.

Finally, PLA officers, especially high-ranking ones, often have more access to information, which allows them to understand what is really going on in China. In China, access to information increases as one’s political standing rises. The PLA also has its own information collection and reporting channels. This access to information often made the military more aware of the severity of China’s problems.⁴¹ PLA officers in general, especially the first generation, mostly come from family backgrounds of peasants. Their children, who were much better educated than they were and enjoyed a

much more prestigious life in cities, tended to join the military in the 1950s-1970s. These third and fourth generations of PLA officers were still connected to peasants or the poorest segments of society through relatives and familial ties. When China's countryside suffered through a massive famine and fits of radicalization in the 1950s-1960s, these officers knew from their families the plight of the peasants and poor Chinese citizens. Therefore, the PLA officers, though often relatively detached from society, understood China's social problems, which made them more aware of threats to China as a nation.

The PLA was not immune to the relentless political campaigns, the government's struggles to govern, and the widespread persecution of innocent people that occurred during the Mao era. The radical elements in the military tortured, imprisoned, and persecuted numerous military officers, ranging from Marshals Peng Dehuai and He Long, to soldiers such as Guo Xingfu, who was a model of military professionalism in the 1950s. In some provinces such as Guangxi and Yunnan, the military committed atrocities against Chinese civilians. This part of history has not been whitewashed, as "everyone coming out of it smells fishy" as one scholar put it.⁴² During the late 1970s, the PLA was derogatively called the "military faction," which was indicative of people's lost trust in the PLA. However, one has to make a value judgment by standing in the current of history rather than out of it when evaluating how the PLA acted in comparison with the general population. It is not a coincidence that despite internal divisions, factional struggles and certain radical elements, the majority of the PLA resisted those who attempted to seize power in the 1960s and firmly supported the Gang of Four's arrest in the 1970s.⁴³ The PLA firmly supported Deng's policies of economic reform and opening in the 1980s, despite the fact that its own institutional interests were harmed as Deng put

military modernization on the backburner.⁴⁴ The PLA's past behavior was consistent with its progressive and moderate political orientation in domestic politics.

PLA officers broadly recognized and understood China's serious domestic challenges, and from this realization concluded that China needed gradual political reform. This conclusion might also come from the common characteristics the PLA shared with its Western counterparts of being cautious, pessimistic, and realistic.⁴⁵ Unlike the powerful or rich who may have a lot to lose as a result of any meaningful reforms, the PLA's relative detachment from China's economic life has contributed to its officers' more sober realization of the severity of problems China has been facing.⁴⁶ The majority of the PLA officer corps has a strong sense of crisis not only in terms of military security but also in terms of China's fundamental internal stability.⁴⁷ As one active-duty PLA officer warned, "China's prosperity would be like skyscrapers built on sand if gradual political reform is perpetually postponed."⁴⁸

Thus, the majority of the PLA officer corps supports gradual but deep reforms to China's political system in order to avoid a drastic and perhaps violent revolution. They do not reject the Western democratic model, but their vision of political reform is not constrained by an existing liberal democratic model. Their bottom line is that China needs to undertake political reforms that make the system fair and just, ensure that it is not flawed by design, and provide a sustainable basis from which the Chinese people's needs for security and development can be met.

As "progressive moderate" in China's domestic politics, with a profound sense of crisis, the PLA is preoccupied with its internal mission. Political system reform many PLA officers privately advocated must simultaneously maintain internal stability. Some

officers believe that addressing external threats can wait until economic and political reforms are carried out successfully and that, for such a core mission of enacting fundamental system reforms that may harm the interests of the privileged and powerful and thus possibly bring great turmoil to society, the PLA is *the* force to stand firmly behind any such significant domestic reforms.⁴⁹ Another former PLA officer who used to work in the Central Military Commission (CMC) office said,

The crisis China is facing now is like trying to re-route an out-of-control train before it reaches *The Cassandra Crossing* [*The Cassandra Crossing* is a 1976 British disaster/thriller film in which a plague-carrying train had to be re-routed via the Cassandra Crossing, where it will plunge into oblivion]. I believe that the PLA should play the role of “political stabilizer,” ensuring that stability is maintained and that the rules of the game are enforced during China’s trial of democratization, which could start with experiments of democratic competition at the regional level and then expand to the national level. The PLA would take down whoever does not follow the rules (of allowing democratic competition). Internal security should be the most important task for the military. Other issues are all nonsense. China could make compromises with Russia, India, and those around the South China Sea because the biggest problem for China is internal stability.⁵⁰

The PLA’s current promotion mechanism favors inward-oriented officers, since foreign language proficiency and training in foreign military institutions do not significantly help officers’ evaluations during the promotion process.⁵¹ This was evidenced by the result of a three-year survey conducted by the PLA National Defense University of its prestigious commander class, composed of 254 division-level officers who enrolled from 2000 to 2002, which indicated that the majority of these officers cannot speak a foreign language.⁵² This parallels the pattern of official promotion in the government system. Officials who occupy the highest positions in the government and ultimately in the Party begin their careers as local officials who are solely focused on the growth of local GDP and what their next position will be. These officials often have neither interest nor experience in foreign affairs. Foreign policy is something that they learn after stepping into a high-level position where part of their portfolio includes

foreign affairs. China's highest-ranking military leaders between 1978 and 2014 share a trait in common: they are neither interested nor experienced in foreign affairs. It is often those at the second-highest level of military leadership – those below the members of the CMC and at the level of deputy commander of a major military region (*fuda junqu ji*) – who have more knowledge of and interest in foreign affairs, or who have some kind of vision about where the PLA should head. The incumbent group of top military leaders, however, often view officers who possess such vision and knowledge and are senior enough to potentially advance onto the first tier of military leadership, as threats.⁵³

“Outward-oriented” PLA: Characteristics and Political Orientation

A typical outward-oriented PLA officer believes that the military should focus on protecting China's boundary of interests – China's political and economic interests that extend well beyond its borders – rather than its territorial borders; he/she is motivated to act strongly depending on the scope of military threats posed by other militaries; he/she often sees the U.S. as a military threat but does not believe a war with the U.S. is inevitable since the U.S. may change its own thinking and calculations; he/she believes in concepts such as soft power and military diplomacy, and that cooperation and engagement with the U.S. and other militaries could benefit the PLA's own development and China's security environment; he/she admires a strong and professional military, but understands the weakness and constraints of the U.S. military under its own political system as well as the fears a rising China could arouse among its neighbors; he/she is more receptive to proposals for the PLA to take on burden-sharing and leadership responsibilities internationally; he/she is assertive in expanding China's sphere of

influence and in gaining the same rights as those possessed by other militaries; and he/she often values foreign language skills, foreign travel, international conferences, and training opportunities, meets visiting foreign military officers in order to learn from and understand others, often thinks analytically, and could easily empathize with another person or country's view.

The PLA as a whole has become more outward-oriented since the early 1990s. In 2013, the PLA conducted five joint exercises with the U.S., exceeding all previous joint exercises with the U.S. combined. As of April 2012, the PLA has sent 1,425 military observers to conflict zones, and 80 military observers are routinely stationed abroad. This is a marked increase since 1990, when China sent military observers abroad for the first time, sending five.⁵⁴ In 2012, China sent a total of 2,000 Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) personnel abroad, making it the largest contributor of PKO personnel among the Permanent Five (P5) members of the United Nations. The PLA Navy (PLAN) has established a high-sea escort task force to protect Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong merchant ships against piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

Why has the PLA become increasingly outward-oriented since the 1990s? There is no single answer to this question. One of the reasons for this shift is the fact that PLA officers have been undergoing a generational shift. As more PLA officers born in the 1940s, 1950s, and increasingly 1960s rise to the military leadership, their own experiences of witnessing China's opening-up and subsequent economic development have undoubtedly shaped their worldviews. Such PLA officers display more openness and a more global perspective, as compared to the previous generations of officers who fought the Japanese and then the bloody civil war, and as a result had a deeper memory of

the humiliations foreign powers forced on China. Additionally, technologies such as the Internet, cell phones, *Tencent qq*,⁵⁵ and *Weibo*⁵⁶ have fundamentally changed Chinese society by connecting it more closely than ever to the outside world. Many of these officers' children have been studying and living abroad since the 1990s, which forms a powerful personal link for these officers to the outside world. Increasingly outward-looking and offense-oriented, these officers respond to strategies and doctrines that have such characteristics.

The PLA's military strategy in Mao's era was focused on "People's War," in which the PLA was instructed to prepare to "fight an early, large, and nuclear war."⁵⁷ Mao introduced the strategic guideline of "active defense and luring enemies in deep" in 1965 and reinforced this operational doctrine in 1969.⁵⁸ Under the "people's war" concept, the PLA would actively abandon economic and industrial centers and instead retreat to China's hinterland to defeat foreign invasions.

General Su Yu first challenged the strategy of "people's war" in 1979, coining the term "people's war under modern conditions."⁵⁹ But the change in military doctrine was not fully launched until General Song Shilun in 1980, then the president of the Academy of Military Sciences, took it on with help from General Li Jijun. In a report entitled *Advice on Strategic Guideline Issues* that Deng endorsed in October 1980, they advocated dropping "enticing enemies to our hinterland" but keeping "active defense."⁶⁰ China's official military strategy did not change into "people's war under modern conditions" until 1985. The change in the PLA's military strategy in the mid-1980s essentially just updated instead of replaced the strategy of "people's war" by prescribing solutions to challenges from mechanized (*jixiehua*) warfare. The concept of drawing

enemies deep into China, however, was fundamentally replaced by the strategy of intercepting and pushing the enemy's aggression away from China's territory or "frontier defense."⁶¹

In the 1990s, the PLA further transformed its military doctrine to "local wars under modern high-tech conditions," devised by General Zhang Zhen, which was reworded during the Hu era to "local wars under informationized conditions."⁶² The 1990-91 Gulf War was an inflection point for the PLA, driving a drastic paradigm shift in its military strategy and doctrines. Since then, the Kosovo War, the Georgian war, and the Afghanistan war repeatedly forced the PLA to draw disturbing conclusions: without high-tech weaponry, information-based command and control systems, and a military that could undertake joint operations, the PLA would face the risk of being quickly defeated by a technologically superior enemy during a short, local war. Precision guided missiles, "global hawks," and other high-tech weaponry supported by satellites and information systems could allow enemies to penetrate China's defenses without sending a large army to its border.⁶³ Since then, active defense has still been still invoked to define the PLA's operational military strategy, but in actuality its content has been revamped to include the thinking of defense through offense. Although the PLA is said to follow a national military strategy of "active defense," the nominal defensive strategy does not exclude offensive tactics such as preemptions and other offensive operations.⁶⁴ General Zhang Qincheng, Former 1st Ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff, wrote:

Being active refers to emphasis on war preparation and offensive operations in battles and war-fighting, and alternatively, to accomplish the goal of strategic defense through tactical offense. It has two most distinct characteristics: first, combine strategic defense with tactical and war-fighting offense organically, which means the general goal is for defense, but actual combat operations are not limited to defense but take form of active offensive operations in strategic defense; second, strategic defense in due time leads to strategic counterattacks and strategic offense, or in another word to fully take advantage

of beneficial situation created by strategic defense and launch strategic counterattack and change the defense into strategic offense till winning the war.⁶⁵

The PLAN's strategic focus became the most forward- and outward-looking of all of China's military services, shifting from the "near-coast defense" strategy adopted in the Mao era, to the "near-seas active defense" strategy in 1985, thanks to Admiral Liu Huaqing's fierce lobbying, and then to the "far-seas operations" strategy by the mid-2000s.⁶⁶

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) started the transition at a considerably slower pace than the PLAN. Prior to the 1980s, the PLAAF clearly adhered to a principle of "staying within Chinese territory and never going to air zones above the high seas."⁶⁷ In 1994, the PLAAF conducted the first-ever large-scale exercise of airborne offensive battles in 45 years. In 2004, the CMC approved the PLAAF's first-ever service-specific strategic concept, which clearly suggested a greater emphasis on offense: "Integrate air and space; be simultaneously prepared for offensive and defensive operations."⁶⁸ In 2008, the PLAAF made it official that it is transitioning from its traditional role as a supportive, localized and defensive force with a focus on homeland air defense toward a strategic air force with defensive/offensive missions.⁶⁹ The PLAAF further set its eyes on space-based informationized systems to "enhance the capability to fight both in the air and in space."⁷⁰ In 2009, General Xu Qiliang, PLA Air Force Commander, claimed the PLAAF is pursuing an air-space, offense-defense strategy.⁷¹ More radical air force analysts like Dai Xu openly advocated for the PLAAF to pursue the capability to "defend against enemies 4,000 kilometers away" from Chinese territory and "once our enemies shoot the first bullet, we push the battleground back to its homeland."⁷² Space, deep sea, and cyber

operations have also caught the PLA's imagination and are increasingly treated as frontiers of China's strategic interest.

As examined above, China's evolving strategies and doctrines kept pushing the PLA's mission outward both in geography and in dimension. What lies at the heart of these transformations is the fundamental change in China's national interests and priorities as well as its threat perception. During the Mao era, a purely defensive strategy that focused on winning wars by luring the enemy deep into China was only viable since China had little to lose inside its border. As China modernizes and develops its economy, allowing the destruction of its prosperous eastern coastal region would be similar to losing the engine of a running train, and as a result Mao's strategy is no longer viable. As China globalizes, protecting sea lines of communication (SLOC) that its trade passes through and its citizens and businesses from wars and chaos have also become a vital interest. Zhang Wenmu, a Chinese geopolitical thinker, first raised the concept of "security boundary," defined as a nation's security concerns over all of its national interests, including those beyond its own borders. He argues that "China's national interests – writ large – are especially relevant to the nation's economic development, and may not only involve all the regions of the world but could even include outer space."⁷³

This "extroverted," outward-oriented tendency is in the PLA's DNA due to China's irreversible linkages with the rest of the world. The PLA's logic is the same as Captain Alfred T. Mahan's, as he explained how the changing globe justified the strengthening of American naval power in 1895, stating, "the world has grown smaller" and "positions formerly distant have become to us of vital importance from their nearness."⁷⁴ China's core interest in continuing economic modernization, which relies on

global trade and securing SLOCs as strategic “lifelines,” as well as the RMA as a global military trend, have together forced the PLA to be more outward-looking. This has continuously transformed the PLA’s “personality” and its perception regarding its mission, and forced it to become more “outward-oriented” and focused on preparing militarily for deterring and countering external threats. This has also greatly incentivized the PLA to be more involved in foreign and security policy-making.

As the PLA undergoes this generational shift, it is more likely that the inward-oriented “personality,” strongly ingrained especially in the first and second generation of PLA officers, will be gradually superseded by an outward-oriented mentality. There is no consensus within the PLA as to whether internal or external threats should take priority. “Before 1990, the internal mission weighed a lot more than external threats. The 1990s, starting with the Gulf War in 1991, was a transitional period for the PLA. Now (2014), external threats weigh more on the PLA’s mind than the internal mission,” one senior PLA officer commented.⁷⁵ However, will the “inward-oriented” personality of the PLA disappear in the long run? It is premature to conclude that the PLA will definitively become an outward-oriented military due to changes in its strategies, doctrines, and the country’s expressed needs. Perceptions, characteristics, traditions, culture, and values, encapsulated in the word “personality,” are sticky and have a time-lagging factor. Other reasons to be less certain about the PLA’s outward-oriented “personality” include: a large percentage of recruits are still from rural regions; and most PLA officers concentrate on training, exercises, and operational movements in their daily work, which leaves them little time and space and does not incentivize them to think about strategy and study other militaries.⁷⁶ Also, the lack of engagement in wars or conflicts with foreign militaries

further contributed to the endurance of the PLA's inward-oriented "personality." This inward-oriented mentality, cultivated throughout the development of PLA officers' careers, has been prevalent among senior officers.⁷⁷ That said, while it may take a long time, the PLA will inevitably become more outward-looking.

Dynamic Two: Professionalization vs. Politicization

Professionalization

Western analysts such as Ellis Joffe and Harlan W. Jencks have pointed out that the PLA has acquired the "basic features of professionalism."⁷⁸ Even during the Cultural Revolution, when the PLA was largely free of political controls, the PLA's professionalism and its basic values, such as discipline, commitment to national unity, and "serving the people," constituted a countervailing force against radicalization as well as the impulse to seize control of the state. Before the PLA officer corps, led by Marshal Ye Jianying, obtained the support of Hua Guofeng (Mao's official successor after the Gang of Four's arrest in 1976), General Li Jijun proposed the idea of "advising by use of force" (*bingjian*).⁷⁹ According to this proposal, the PLA would have taken down the Gang of Four and forced Hua's hand, in essence advocating a classic military coup. The PLA leaders themselves ruled out Li's idea, on the grounds that such actions ran against the PLA's nature.⁸⁰ Deng, after becoming the paramount leader of China, relieved himself of military posts such as Chief of the General Staff and took on the position of Chairman of the CMC, a position meant to be occupied by a political leader. These instances of PLA officers demonstrating such self-restraint came from a deeply ingrained belief in generations of PLA officers, an indication of their professionalism, that they can

never become Yuan Shikai, a warlord who overthrew the Qing Dynasty's last emperor but later appointed himself China's new emperor.

Since 1978, the PLA has become a professional army with some peculiar characteristics. The most noticeable change in the PLA since 1978 has been the emphasis on its professionalization, heralded by the rise of its basic education and professional military education (PME) level, the regularization of training and exercises, and the institutionalization of a method of promotion that favors expertise, experience, rotation, and younger age.

Harlan W. Jencks believed that the nature of modern warfare raised the requirement for military professionalism in all countries.⁸¹ The PLA has been forced to adapt to the rapid development of RMA and promote a group of younger professional officers who understand modern warfare and can master relevant weaponry and command and control systems.⁸² Ellis Joffe believed that China's post-Deng leaders no longer commanded the same political authority as Mao or Deng, which further reinforced the need to strengthen the PLA's professionalism.⁸³

Samuel Huntington defined three characteristics for professional soldiers: expertise, corporate spirit, and responsibility.⁸⁴ Although there has been an internal debate within China since 1949 about "red vs. expert," or in other words politicization vs. professionalization, since 1985 a consensus has been established, and since 1993 consolidated, that the PLA should move in the direction of military modernization, which inevitably requires professionalization of the PLA officer corps.⁸⁵ Among the three characteristics Huntington mentioned, the PLA emphasized expertise the most, which it believes will only be mastered "through systematic and standardized military education

and training.”⁸⁶ As You Ji points out, expertise and management skills have become important criteria for PLA officer promotion.⁸⁷ PLA officers’ expertise is not only exemplified by advanced education and PME, but also by experience serving in combat and non-combat operations such as disaster relief, multilateral joint exercises, and anti-piracy operations.⁸⁸

The most visible index of the PLA’s professionalization, though not necessarily the most indicative, is the education level of officers. In 1949, 68 percent of PLA officers did not have an elementary school-level education (Grade 6 in the U.S.).⁸⁹ In 1980, 9 percent of PLA officers had an educational level above college (three-year college) while 56.9 percent had an education above professional schools (between high school and college) and 34.1 percent below Grade 12.⁹⁰ In 2008, 85 percent of PLA officers had an education level above a three-year college, among whom 66 percent had a four-year university bachelor degree (though half of them achieved the bachelor degree through long-distance learning and night schools instead of enrollment in a university) and 10 percent received higher than a bachelor degree.⁹¹

Table 2.1: PLA Officers' Education Level (1949-2008)

PLA Officers' Education Level	1949	1953	1959	1980	2008
Elementary School (Grade 1-3) and Below	68%	25.71%	2.2%	-	-
Elementary School (Grade 4-6)	32%	39.02%	32.7%	-	-
Middle School (Grade 9)	-	25.71%	48.6%	56.9%	-
High School (Grade 12)	-	7.92%	11.9%	34.1%	15%
Professional School Education	-	-	-	9%	20.4%
University	-	2.32%	4.6%	-	56.1%
Graduate School	-	-	-	-	8.5%
Average Level of Education (years)	5.28	-	-	10.04	14.06

Sources: Liu Yan, "Course of PLA Officers Improving Educational/Cultural Structure," *dangshi bolan*, Issue 11 (2008); Wang Fa'an, *Strategy of Strengthening the Military in China's Peace and Development: Contemporary Military Affairs of China, Volume II* (Beijing: zhong guo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 1989); *Contemporary Political Affairs of China, Volume I* (Beijing: dang dai zhong guo chu ban she, 1994).

As a result, the average education PLA officers received in their lifetime was 5.28 years in 1949, 10.04 years in 1980 and 14.06 years in 2008. This means that the PLA took 30 years to push its officers' education level from grade six to grade ten and another 30 years to push their education level from grade ten to that of a sophomore in college.⁹² According to the "Regulation on Appointment and Relieving of Positions of Active-duty Officer" issued in 2002, all officers promoted above the level of regiment must have an education level of a three-year college or above.⁹³

PLA officers' increased education level over the past 30 years is a notable achievement, but it should be treated with some skepticism. First, a large percentage of officers with college or university degrees obtained their degrees through a self-learning testing procedure, night schools, or long-distance education, which is qualitatively

different than someone who graduated after full participation in college life. A three-year survey conducted by the PLA National Defense University (NDU) concluded that 90 percent of the 254 members of NDU's division-level commander class from 2000 to 2002 only had an education level of junior high school (Grade 8) or high school (Grade 12) before joining the military, but obtained a college-level education through self-testing, long-distance learning, and in-service training.⁹⁴ Among those surveyed, only 18 percent obtained a college-level education in science and technology.⁹⁵ Second, a large percentage of officers obtained their degrees from professional military schools, which are substandard at best when compared to civilian colleges and universities at the same level.⁹⁶ In other words, the requirements and rigor of PME schools are much lower than civilian universities.⁹⁷ Third, teachers and instructors in military command academies rarely rotate back to combat roles. As a result, theories taught in command academies grow outdated and do not effectively improve officers' knowledge and skills for training and warfare.⁹⁸ Lastly, the fact that China has not fought a full-scale war in over three decades means that PLA officers lack combat experience and have not been able to apply theories they learned in the classroom to actual war-fighting. For example, under Hu Jintao the PLA formally shifted its strategy to winning local wars under informationized conditions. However, while the U.S. has fought multiple wars under such conditions, the PLA has yet to do so.

In recent years, the PLA has started to recruit specially designated university students (by paying their tuition and recruiting among students with lower scores) in order to address the problem of the lower quality of PMEs.⁹⁹ However, the problem with

this practice is that these university graduates often turn out to be inexperienced and incompetent command officers as soon as they graduate and are placed in platoons.¹⁰⁰

Age limits have been specified and strictly enforced in considering officers for promotions, which encourages younger officers to meet more professional requirements to move up the ladder. The oldest chief of general staff (CGS) after Yang Dezhi (Deng's appointment) was Chen Bingde, who was 66 when stepping into his position; the youngest CGS was Chi Haotian (1987-92), who was 58 when obtaining this position. Since 1978, the CGS's average tenure has been five years, with Yang, the oldest CGS, serving in this position from 1980 to 1987 until the age of 78.¹⁰¹ A strict age restriction of 65 years old for CGS was one of the official reasons given for eliminating General Zhang Qinsheng from the race for CGS. For CMC members, in a time of team transition, those who are younger than 68 can stay, and those who are 68 years old and up must retire, according to a rule called "seven up and eight down" inherited by the military from the Party and government personnel practice.¹⁰² This means that those who are hoping to stay on the CMC for two terms have to be 62 or younger when chosen as a CMC member for the first time. The "seven up and eight down" rule is only applied to existing CMC members. PLA officers at the level of Military Region (MR) leaders, who are not CMC members, have to retire by 65; at the level of MR deputy leader, must retire by 63; at the level of corps leader but non-combat troops, must retire by 60; and at the level of corps leader but combat troops, have to retire by 55.¹⁰³

Table 2.2 Partial Requirements for the Promotion of PLA Active-duty Officers

Ranking Level	Age Limit (CT)	Age Limit (NCT)	Time Limit for Officer Exchange (CT)	Time Limit for Officer Exchange (NCT)	Min. Time for Stationing at One Post	Max. Time for Stationing at One Post	Promotion Authority
Platoon	30	30	4	5	3	N/A	Principal of Division
Company	35	35	4	5	3	N/A	
Battalion	40	40	4	5	3	N/A	
Regiment	45	45	4	5	3	N/A	Principal of Corps
		50					Principal of MR/ Services or GD
Division	50+5	55	4	5	3	10	Chairman of CMC
Corps	55+5	58	5	5	3	10	
		60					
Military Region (MR)	63					10	
	65						

Sources: “Regulations on the Appointment and Removal of the PLA Officers in Active Service” (2002); “Law on PLA Officers in Active Service” (revised), passed by the NPC Standing Committee in December 2000.

* CT=Combat Troops; NCT=Non-combat Troops; GD=General Departments

** Each ranking level is divided into the levels of deputal and principal.

***Limit for Officer Exchange means the maximum years served at one post by officer who is required to exchange or rotate as the next step;

**** Max. Time for Stationing at One Post means the maximum years served at one particular post at one particular level and those who exceed this limit would be forced to retire.

***** Deputy battalion commanders would be promoted by the Principal of the division-level unit; officers from the principal battalion to the deputy regiment level would be promoted by the Principal of the corps-level unit. Officers from regiment level to deputy division level would be promoted by the Principal of military region. Officers from division level and above would be promoted by Chairman of the CMC, a particular article stipulated in the 2002 regulation and a revision of the previous regulation. In the previous regulation on officer promotion, the promotion of the officers at the principal division level and above was subject to the authority of the CMC Chairman.

*****Principal of any military unit normally includes both the military commanders and political commissars except General Staff Department (without a political commissar) and General Politics Department (without a military commander).

A less noticeable and more problematic index for PLA officer evaluation is that of rotations. Rotations among military regions and general departments are increasingly a crucial criterion for PLA officer promotion. Rotations between military regions are a crucial component of senior officer promotion. After Zhang Wannian became CGS in 1992 (1992-95), all four CGS (including Zhang) had experience as commander of at least two military regions.¹⁰⁴ This requirement was probably introduced because the CGS under Mao and Deng played the role of senior military advisor, but in the post-Deng era, the CGS has to directly devise and execute military operations on his own. Therefore, once the Party left military matters solely to the PLA, having experience as commander of several military regions generally became a necessary condition for being promoted to CGS.

A new regulation was also enacted to force out any officer at the level of division, corps, or military region leader who stays in one position without being promoted for ten years, which is known as “death by ten years’ limit” (*shinian daxian*).¹⁰⁵ However, the enforcement of this rotation requirement can be bypassed by almost nominal, box-checking, short-term “embedding” (*guazhi*) with military regions, as long as the hopeful officers are pre-chosen by their “patrons.” This has led to a group of officers who rose to the top “by helicopter,” with flashy resumes filled with rotational experiences, but in reality, “they just passed the stages to get to the top as planned.”¹⁰⁶

In order to build a professional force, the PLA must restore the honorability of the military profession and make it materially highly attractive, while also implementing transparent, fair and just promotion procedures in order to attract high-quality talent to join and stay in the military. This means that the PLA must become a volunteer-based,

lean military, with standardized and transparent merit-based promotion procedures. Until this happens, the problem of disconnect between higher education and higher capability/expertise will continue to assert itself and impede the PLA's professionalization process to a certain degree.

The rise of the PLA's professionalization has coincided with the decline of its politicization. The debate about whether the PLA is a Party army or a State army has persisted throughout the past nine decades since its founding in 1928, even though at times it was muted or disappeared in words only to be reborn in actions. From 1978 to 2013, communism as an ideology receded gradually from mainstream military thinking and even officially became much less prominent. A glimpse of that trend could be seen in the series of changes to the oath each PLA soldier has to take.¹⁰⁷

The Soldier's Oath has gone through four revisions since 1949, each of which requires obedience to orders. (See Appendix B: The Evolution of the PLA's Soldier's Oath). The last two iterations are more similar in spirit. The first version emphasized people (mentioned twice), Chairman Mao, and the motherland, but did not mention the Party. At this point, the Chinese military and political leadership heavily overlapped, and the PLA's identity as a force whose victories relied on support from the masses dictated an emphasis on an army that was the "children of the people." By 1984, when China was undergoing the transition of returning the PLA to its barracks, the second version of the Soldier's Oath still kept the identity of "a revolutionary soldier" but emphasized "love" for the Party and "socialism," the "socialist motherland," and "socialist construction." By 1997, when ideology had clearly receded from Chinese society, the image of "a revolutionary soldier" and the requirement for "love for the Communist Party" were both

dropped. Instead, *obedience* to the Party's leadership was required, and the requirement for "serving the people" returned to the oath. The current oath, the result of a 2010 revision, didn't deviate substantially from the 1997 version.

Over the past three decades, the trend of professionalization has been the single most important factor that has been transforming the PLA. How does increasing professionalization affect the PLA's foreign policy preferences? The answers are mixed. First, professionalization will certainly enhance the PLA's competence with regards to the quality and appropriateness of the advice it gives when it is given an opportunity to express itself. Since foreign and security policy-making is a repeated game, credibility matters and the PLA can increase its credibility when its advice and recommendations are sound and appropriate. Second, professional soldiers are naturally realistic and cautious towards war, especially when they don't have confidence in winning. Professionalization will make the PLA more aware of its weakness and thus more conscious about preparing for war than fighting it. Third, continuous professionalization further pushes the military to internalize the principle of "the military only managing military affairs" and therefore staying out of civilian politics.¹⁰⁸

Almost all military officers interviewed expressed their support for the concept of a "national army" and believed that such an evolution is "an inevitable social trend, a trend the rest of the world follows."¹⁰⁹ The PLA officer corps is aware that the PLA cannot escape this evolution, and supports it even though they understand that this reform will inevitably reduce the privilege and uniqueness of their social status compared to the government. Having internalized the previous indoctrination and increased professionalization after 1978, the PLA officer corps agrees on the principle of the

military's voluntary subordination to the State, though it believes that China's political leader, rather than the PLA, should decide when it is the right time for such a transition to occur. All of those officers who favored building a state army believed that doing so is an integral part of China's democratization process and therefore the PLA should not "jump the gun" but instead wait until "the nation calls for it."¹¹⁰

The flip side of specializing in military affairs and further professionalization is the PLA's increasing rejection of civilians "wantonly meddling with" what they see as professional military business. While ready to welcome changes in civil-military relationship brought by "a state army," the PLA officers interviewed showed impatience with civilian officials who are inexperienced in military affairs giving orders to the military through unauthorized channels. They criticized Premier Wen Jiabao's "arbitrary instructions" in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan Wenchuan earthquake ordering the PLA to march to the epicenter of the earthquake within a time limit.¹¹¹

The PLA's further professionalization does *not* necessarily mean it will take a more restrained and pacifist position regarding foreign and security policies. Professionalization, which means military modernization and the training of a specialized force and other pure military affairs becoming the military's full-time job and sole responsibility, makes budgetary politics more important to the military than ever.¹¹² As the PLA continues to professionalize, it needs to justify its existence and prove to the political leadership and Chinese people why the defense budget needs to increase. The PLA's awareness of budgetary politics became especially acute after it was divested from the marketplace in 1998 and systematic reforms were launched to separate the PLA from China's defense industry. Prior to the 1999 defense industry and armament procurement

reforms, triggered by the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade earlier that year, the PLA didn't have a say in the budget, either how much they got or how this would be allocated.¹¹³ In one interviewee's words, the PLA never saw its money before 1999, as the budgeted allocation would have been directly channeled from the state coffer to the defense industry firms. Only after 1999 were the interests of the PLA and the defense industry significantly separated, making the PLA much more driven to receive a higher budget, gain more autonomy to allocate its resources, and use its money more efficiently.

The economic reforms of the 1980s and Deng's decision to urge the military to be patient and allow economic reform to take precedence taught the military a hard lesson. The PLA's economic hardships not only demoralized the PLA and accelerated its brain drain, but also led to attempts at making money on the side and subsequent corruption. All of this, the PLA now realizes, threatens its vitality and stability as an institution. The PLA understands that more resources and officers' personal welfare depend on attention from political leaders and the public's respect. It also understands the need to prove its worth, especially since China has been at peace for so long. Failure to demonstrate its capabilities and political and public significance, the PLA now understands, will result in fewer resources, which the PLA needs in order to improve its own well-being, and its armament and capabilities. It is reasonable to speculate that a budget-conscious military may prefer low-intensity frictions or even an extremely limited war, as such conflict would justify a steady and growing defense budget.¹¹⁴

Second, professionalization also makes the military "no-war anxious," as officers worry that without real combat experience, the military, though better equipped and well-trained, still does not know how to fight an actual war. Those who gained combat

experience during the Korean War, the 1962 Sino-Indian border clash, the Sino-Soviet standoff over Zhenbao Island in 1969, or the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War, understood that real combat experience improves the military's understanding of how to most effectively train itself and prepare for war during peacetime.

Some officers worry about the PLA's "peace disease" (*heping jixi*), a term used to describe how when peace seems a perpetual state for China, the PLA's military effectiveness suffers from inertia, weakness, and a lack of discipline and combat consciousness. According to Senior Colonel Liu Mingfu, a PLA National Defense University professor, the PLA's military exercises often turn into "acting," for example as a squad with cooking duties, though already "killed" in action, still cooked meals, and a soldier could "destroy" dozens of heavily armed "enemy" tanks with shoulder-fired rockets without even moving.¹¹⁵ In a widely publicized incident, a PLA platoon fired all of its bullets after a planned military exercise, and became a sitting duck when it was "ambushed" unexpectedly on its way back to the barracks. Lieutenant General Wang Hongguang, Deputy Commander of the Nanjing Military Region, once openly criticized such a "peace disease" of the military, stating:

The PLA's field training looks more like a resident barrack. Instead of staying in field training tents, soldiers stay in barracks, walk on hardened surface. Tap water and electric lighting are introduced. Those field training camps for senior and mid-level officers are even installed with air-conditioning, telephone and Internet interface. In addition, the field vehicles and battle fields should have been strictly guarded, with no outsiders allowed to be around. However, hawkers followed the troops' move, which not only compromised military secrecy but spoiled the soldiers.¹¹⁶

The PLA's "peace disease" is not only reflected in the PLA itself, but also in the society in which it lives. "More than 70 percent of the PLA force is the single child of their families. Could such a military force still be hardened enough to fight and win a real war? Could the current Chinese society still have the nerve to face massive casualties,

casualties of those single children in their families as well as remaining parents and grandparents of the war dead? That is a big question mark in everyone's mind," commented a PLA officer-turned historian.¹¹⁷

The belief is gradually taking hold in the PLA that the best way to answer the above doubts about the military's "peace disease" is to fight a real war that it has a high probability of winning.¹¹⁸ These doubts were highlighted by China's catastrophic loss during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border war. The Scarborough Shoal standoff in 2012 and the sending of the CNOOC 981 oil rig to a disputed section of the South China Sea in 2014 could both have drawn the PLA close to the brink of war if the other side fired the first shot.¹¹⁹

Lastly, professionalization also drove the PLA to be more "outward-oriented" and more focused on external threats. This will lead the PLA to expand its interests and capabilities in missions beyond China's immediate periphery.

Politicization: Counter-trend in Professionalization

The PLA General Politics Department (GPD) and the system of political officers it represents is the largest single impediment to the PLA's professionalization. GPD is an interest group under the large bureaucracy of the PLA, representing approximately 100,000 political officers from platoons to the top military leadership. The impact of the GPD on China's foreign and security policy-making is two-fold: though not the only opposition, the GPD's strong resistance to and firm control of the internal debate surrounding "a state military" leads to an institutionalized disconnect between the military and the government in terms of foreign policy;¹²⁰ and the GPD's portfolio

includes control over military propaganda and the right to designate and authorize a few active-duty military officers to speak to the Chinese and foreign media. Not all of those favored by the GPD represent the thinking of the GSD and the individual PLA services.

Two key points need to be highlighted. First, not all political officers are simple instruments of the Party whose actions are governed purely by ideology, propaganda, and indoctrination. Some, especially a few who proceeded to senior commissar positions such as General Liu Yazhou, have strategic vision. Second, as the military officers in the PLA have professionalized over the past three decades, political officers have professionalized in their own right as well. However, as an institutionalized system of planting political officers to control personnel evaluation and promotion, GPD's departmental interest runs counter to the overall trend of the PLA's de-politicization and professionalization.

For the first generation of officer corps, the rotation between military and political officer tracks was relatively open and interchangeable given the shortage of capable military officers. Deng Xiaoping, Lin Biao, Chen Yi, and Peng Dehuai all had experience as political commissars. Nobody doubted their military expertise and accomplishments. However, as professionalization and the specialization of military duties has progressed, it has become increasingly difficult and almost impossible for political officers to move back to military tracks.¹²¹

As political officers separate and specialize in personnel issues, providing evaluations, training/education opportunities, and recommendations for officer promotions and demotions, their interventions as a group are generally seen in a negative light by professional military officers.¹²²

The PLA's dual-leadership structure (*shuang shouzhang zhi*), in which political officers (commissars) achieve parallel hierarchical status with commanders at least in name, created internal frictions in the PLA, even though the practice is murkier than the regulation.¹²³ (The debate on whether the PLA should be a "Party army" or a "State army" is discussed in Chapter 3) You Ji insightfully observed that the "CCP's practice of appointing civilian commissars to the army...was as much motivated by factional consideration as by ideological worry" and "These commissars deeply worsened the army factional activities and further divided the military."¹²⁴ Each CCP main faction in Shanghai between 1927 and 1934 would dispatch its followers as commissars to the army for the sake of broadening its political influence, according to You.¹²⁵ From 1930 onwards, supremacy of the political commissar leadership, in the form of the political commissar responsibility system (*zhengzhi weiyuan quanquan daibiaozhi*), took such a strong hold in the army that even the Party committee system was abolished between 1932 and 1936 to prevent the Party committee members, mainly commanders, from overpowering the outside commissars.¹²⁶

Political commissars no longer had the final say about military activities after the catastrophic Battle of *Xue Cun* (Snow Village) in 1942, in which the Japanese killed the Eighth District of Jizhong's commander and political commissar. Such a catastrophic military failure was due to a serious disagreement on military operations between Commander Chang Deshan and Political Commissar Wang Yuanyin. Wang prevailed in the end, which led to the catastrophic military failure and deaths of both Chang and Wang. Although commanders or political commissars were occasionally killed, the simultaneous deaths of both the top-ranking commander and political commissar had never happened

before. To further humiliate the Red Army, the Japanese military cut off the head of Commander Chang and hung it in a birdcage on the city gate of Hejian for years. This incident led to the CCP's 1942 decision to strip political commissars of the final decision-making power in war-fighting.¹²⁷

The fallout from the Battle of *Xue Cun* led the CMC to rethink the political commissar responsibility system. The CMC decided on September 1, 1942 to shift the final decision-making power on military actions from political commissars to military commanders. According to this decision, ultimate command authority on military affairs during times of war, at the Regiment level (*juntuan*) and above, belongs to military commanders.¹²⁸ Political commissars, though enjoying the same status as commanders, could only supervise commanders, and such a role could only be realized through the Party Committee. This means that unless military commanders are evidently making disastrous mistakes or directly violating military orders handed down from above, political commissars have no right to intervene in military decisions. In 1952-53, Marshal Peng Dehuai and a group of professionally-oriented officers planned to within ten years completely phase out the dual-leadership structure and establish the one-head command system, whereby military commanders would possess sole commanding authority.¹²⁹ Mao and Luo Ronghuan, however, objected to this proposal and due to their influence it was eventually overturned.¹³⁰

The principle of the “Party commands the gun” in practice has never meant that the political commissar is the first in command.¹³¹ In practice, it means that the PLA units have to obey the decisions of the Party Committee in the military at higher levels,

particularly one level above. The “Party commands the gun” does not mean commanders have to obey the commands of the political commissar at the same level.

After the 1990s, in PLA units above the Field Army level, commanders supersede in ranking political commissars at the same level by half a step. For example, the Chiefs of two general departments, the General Logistics Department (GLD) and the General Armament Department (GAD), are half a step higher in rank than political commissars. The political commissars of GLD and GAD only have jurisdiction over their department’s executive offices (*jiguan*). They do not oversee the larger, massive GLD and GAD systems, which have corresponding local offices at various levels in services and all the military regions. The GSD is an exception, as it is not affiliated with any political commissar. Since the commanders of PLAN, PLAAF, and the Second Artillery became CMC members in 2004, with their administrative position moving up half a step, commanders have always superseded their political commissars in rank.¹³²

In units at and below the level of Field Army, commander and commissar are at the same level.¹³³ When commanders and political commissars enjoy the same ranking, who is in charge of their unit depends on a few factors:

First, whoever holds the position of Secretary of the Party Committee (*dangwei shuji*), whether it is the political commissar or the commander, often has more influence. This is because the Party Committee has a certain power over the recommendation of cadres/officers. Therefore, whoever holds the position of Secretary of the Party Committee may have more influence in agenda-setting and therefore decision-making on personnel issues. Political commissars are traditionally responsible for routine cadre/officer personnel management, such as annual evaluations, training opportunities,

and weighing in on officer promotions.¹³⁴ Another prerogative political commissars have is agenda-setting for Party Committee meetings, as they can set the topic and tone of these meetings, though the Party Committee follows the mechanism of “one person one vote.” This means that political commissars, even those holding the position of Party Secretary, cannot necessarily override military commanders who hold the position of Deputy Party Secretary. Second, seniority matters. If a commander is new to the job, while the political commissar has been there for years, the political commissar will usually take charge, and vice versa. Third, personality matters. Occasionally, the commander or commissar has an overpowering and competitive personality and may break all of the above rules and prevail over his counterpart.¹³⁵

The dual-leadership structure with the political commissar enjoying the same rank as the commander, enforced at the Field Army level and below, has caused perpetual conflicts within the PLA. As one senior officer described the dynamics and tensions,

If both the commander and commissar are very experienced leaders with strong personalities, they will keep fighting each other and the unit will not have peace. However, if both the commander and commissar are weak, nothing can be done. Therefore, a balance needs to be struck, with a weak political commissar sent to assist a strong commander or vice versa. Isn't that creating headaches for oneself? Aren't we (the PLA) inventing problems that we ourselves must solve?¹³⁶

The PLA's politicization also takes time and detracts from the professional training it should receive. Military officers who specialize in training and exercises complain that meetings and study sessions initiated by political officers are so numerous that they directly interfere with their training and exercise programs.¹³⁷ In peacetime, training has more impact than anything on enhancing troops' readiness. Military officers have their own working meetings for planning, organization, and evaluation. When military officers have too many meetings, political officers' meetings can never be

reduced and military officers have to either endure exhausting meeting schedules or cut their own needed working meetings. When Xi Jinping ordered the military to hold fewer meetings, the military in general held fewer meetings, but the military officers' own meetings were cut while the political sessions stayed the same.¹³⁸

Politicization not only interfered with the PLA's professional training, but also with its military education. An educator of a top-level military technology university concluded that military cadets in his school lost one-fourth of their science and technology instruction during their five-year enrollment due to mandatory political indoctrination.¹³⁹

Political officers also intervene in evaluations of military training in a way that distorts the incentives of military officers. One PLA officer who organized night exercises in the Shenyang Military Region complained that after several sleepless nights, the exercises were completed and regarded by military officers as a great success. The next morning, political officers came to him and claimed that the winning platoon's shooting scores were fabricated, implying that he deliberately favored that platoon because the platoon leader was close to him. Although this accusation was baseless, according to this officer, political officers reported this assertion to the military region's headquarters. During subsequent exercises, this officer fabricated the shooting results of platoons, balancing among each platoon and picking the one that had no close connection to either him or other power centers. "The whole experience was very frustrating. All I wanted to do was to do my job well and let the most competent platoon win the contest by itself. But in the end, I had to bend myself so political officers did not make such false accusations, which could have harmed my career," said this PLA officer.

Political officers not only can disrupt military training but, more importantly, they also mostly control the evaluation of officers. According to the regulations, military officers above the regiment level are to be evaluated once every two to three years and officers below the battalion level are to be evaluated every year. A team headed by either the ranking commanding officer or the political officer, but composed mostly of political officers, lead the evaluation. The evaluation results play a critical role in determining whether officers should be kept on the promotion track as “reserve cadre candidates” (*houbei ganbu renxuan*) or whether they should receive various training opportunities.¹⁴⁰

One PLA officer explained his “happy” encounters with a political officer. When there was an opportunity to study abroad, the unit he worked in recommended three candidates. The most competent officer clashed with the political officer, so the political officer ruled him out on the grounds of “immaturity and a bad relationship with the masses as an officer.” The second officer was going through a divorce, so political officers were convinced there must be something wrong with him as well. The winning candidate, the one I interviewed, confessed that he was chosen because he kept a low profile and was always polite with political officers, even though in his heart he disliked them as well. As he explained,

We, in the training department, were always working overtime on evenings and during weekends, while political officers would pat us on our shoulders to tell us to take it easy. They write laudatory summaries of themselves in their own work evaluation at the end of the year, such as incentivizing officers to work overtime. When I applied for fellowships overseas after they granted the opportunity to political officers, they did not help me with anything in the application but they would write in their own evaluation that they “worked so hard to find opportunities for excellent officers to study abroad in order to meet the challenge of winning local wars under high-tech conditions, and even managed to persuade them to come back as soon as their studies finished.”¹⁴¹

Political officers band together with each other more closely than military officers do, as they are in their unit’s minority. Whereas military officers increasingly specialize

and cannot always be interchangeably transferred, political officers do not have that constraint. They have more incentive to use their personal networks for better placement. Political officers do not master skills that could be useful after their retirement, in contrast to military and technical officers. Nor do they control the budget or military decisions. The only important aspect political officers can exert control over is personnel evaluation, which is the basis for officer promotion. The prerogative they have is to send military officers into political study sessions or training that would take these officers away from their routine work. Any defiance would be punished with political labels such as “they don’t understand politics” or worse, “they are not loyal to the Party.” Therefore, political officers negatively impact the PLA’s overall efforts at professionalization by disrupting training routines and squeezing the time allotted for military work and sabotaging competent military officers’ promotions at their whim.

The tenures of two GPD chiefs in particular, Yang Baibing and Xu Caihou, were characterized by their excessively combative styles in bureaucratic infighting. When Yang Baibing, Yang Shangkun’s half brother, assumed leadership of the GPD in 1987, the GPD’s bureaucratic power increased sharply. Yang Baibing was “presumptuous and domineering.”¹⁴² Using the pretense of strengthening the Party’s control over the military after the Tiananmen Incident, Yang offended much more senior military leaders such as General Zhang Zhen and went head-to-head with reform-minded generals, including then Deputy Secretary General of the CMC General Li Jijun.¹⁴³ Under Yang’s leadership, the GPD became an arrogant and overbearing “mighty unit” (*qiangshi danwei*), which intervened much more assertively and aggressively in other military bureaucracies’ work. One general recalled that from 1989 to 1992 the GPD scrutinized and had to approve of

all of the National Defense University's (NDU) activities, big and small. One senior PLA general recalled:

Suddenly one day in October, then NDU President General Zhang Zhen disappeared for a day and nobody could reach him. Then on a program I sent to GPD for approval, GPD called me, which had not happened for years, since (if) you wanted to know the progress of their approval or wanted them to expedite the process, you (should) call GPD and pull favors from them to get things done. So I was very surprised to get the call from GPD, and I was very politely notified that this program had been approved and in the future such programs did not need to be sent to GPD for approval. Later that day, I heard that Yang Baibing was purged and General Zhang Zhen, who was then getting ready to retire, was promoted to CMC Vice Chairman. I realized then that the "center of the world" had shifted from GPD to NDU (General Zhang Zhen's institution). What an unexpected twist of fate!¹⁴⁴

During CMC Vice Chairman Xu Caihou's tenure, the political officer system was revived and strengthened, against the trend of strengthening professionalization that had taken hold since Yang Baibing's downfall. Xu had an early foot in China's high politics, starting in 1999, when he became member of the CMC at the position of Executive Deputy Director of the GPD.¹⁴⁵ (Xu's involvement in China's high politics is detailed in Chapter Three.) Xu added positions for political officers throughout the system and emphasized their roles in the military in evaluating and recommending officers for promotion.

As made clear earlier, the PLA's continuous professionalization has had a mixed impact on its positioning in foreign and security policies. Continuous politicization has had a more definitively negative impact. The GPD as an organized interest group will certainly oppose any move away from the "Party army" towards a "national army," because such a shift would inevitably lead to the PLA's streamlining and call into question the reason for the GPD's existence. This means that in reality the PLA and the government system are independent of each other, which leads to a lack of coordination

and even frictions between the two in China's politics and foreign/security policies.
(More details can be found in Chapters Five and Six.)

The PLA's own decision-making system is highly centralized under the GSD's Operations Department, which could be compared to the PLA's mind, while the GPD dominates the PLA's propaganda operations, which could be thought of as the PLA's mouth. The "mouth" (GPD) does not always speak what the "mind" thinks (GSD), as the mind does not dominate the mouth.

Dynamic Three: Unity vs. The Rise of Inter-service Rivalry

Inter-service rivalries have long existed in the PLA.¹⁴⁶ However, as the four mighty general departments overshadowed the services, services had weak voices. The biggest problem could be more accurately defined as "stove-piping" – either the General Department-service barrier or the service barrier (*junzhong de fanli*).

One example of the stove-piping and the disconnect between the services is that during peacetime military regions only have army troops under their authority, while air force and naval troops in these regions report to Air Force Headquarters and Navy Headquarters directly, thus bypassing the military regions.¹⁴⁷ The problem of stove-piping not only exists among services, but also between mighty general departments and services. For example, the war-fighting command departments, including the command divisions of services, do not have any cooperation mechanism with armament development and management agencies.¹⁴⁸ The need for appropriate armaments to fight wars, therefore, cannot be transmitted through institutionalized channels to armament R&D managers. Such a missing link demonstrates the weakness of services as compared to general departments.

Inter-service rivalry (as defined in the West) has become more intense in China in recent years, as the services, especially new services such as the Navy and the Air Force, start to rise. For example, the PLAAF has long struggled with the PLAN in its effort to get an airfield on Hainan Island, as all military airfields on the island currently belong to the PLAN's South China Sea Fleet. However, the PLAN's naval aviation force continues to strongly resist the PLAAF's attempt to build a foothold on Hainan, which has resulted in the PLAN's refusal to give any of its airfields to the PLAAF.¹⁴⁹

Even though the chiefs of the PLAN, PLAAF, and Second Artillery became members of the CMC after 2004, as of 2013 this move is largely symbolic as service chiefs are not generally in the CMC's decision-making chain.¹⁵⁰ The relative junior status of service chiefs in the CMC is revealed by the fact that service chiefs are generally chosen from among the deputy chiefs of the general staff.¹⁵¹ It is hard to imagine that these service chiefs, though automatically CMC members, have equal status as the Chief of General Staff after just stepping up from the position of deputy chiefs of general staff. Most frictions between services occurred when there was a sharing of facilities and interests. However, differences in styles and focus are emerging, making inter-service rivalry potentially a factor that impacts the PLA's behavior as a whole.

Inter-service rivalry is starting to become intense, along with the rise of the PLAN and PLAAF, but has not yet become a major problem because of the enormous gap of power between the army and the rest of the services. The PLA land force has a long tradition and occupies a rarefied position due to its role in the revolution led by the CCP. The other, younger services – Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery – were all established much later and experienced more troubled times during Lin Biao's tenure as

Defense Minister.¹⁵² In the PLA, the land army has traditionally occupied the leadership roles. A small but telling piece of evidence is Admiral Liu Huaqing's symbolic gesture: upon leaving the post of Commander of the PLAN and taking the position of Deputy Secretary of the CMC in 1988, Admiral Liu changed from his naval uniform into the army's green uniform, as he wrote in his memoir.¹⁵³ In 1997, despite the small decline from a few years prior, over 75 percent of all PLA personnel belonged to the PLA army.¹⁵⁴

Inter-service rivalry could intensify because of the development of two trends that started in the early 1990s: first, the dawn of a RMA, which mandates that the PLA develop command, control, communications and computer-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) technologies and conduct integrated joint operations; and second, contingencies and threats that have started to concentrate on China's southern and eastern coastal regions. Both trends press for the acceleration of the Navy's and Air Force's modernization. This has led to a seismic shift in the defense budget towards allocating increased resources to building the PLAN and PLAAF in the 2000s.¹⁵⁵ According to a senior PLA army officer:

In terms of defense budget allocation, different services have certainly spoken for their own interests. The Navy emphasizes the strategic importance of aircraft carriers and submarines; the Air Force the necessities of strategic bombers; and the Second Artillery on the expansion of the nuclear arsenal and increasing its survivability and penetration capability. However, the Second Artillery has a relatively weak influence. It is questionable how far the Air Force could fly. Therefore, the final winner (in the rising military budget) in the 1990s and onwards is the Navy, which in the end has to be a global navy and have the potential to engage in non-combat missions overseas to demonstrate China's military deterrence and soft power.¹⁵⁶

China's inter-service rivalry is also embodied in the rivalry among military regions. As Taiwan and the East and the South China Seas have become increasingly pressing security concerns since the 1990s, the military regions guarding these areas have

obtained greater attention from military and political leaders. This southern and eastern shift of geopolitical and strategic concerns has made inland military regions such as the Lanzhou Military Region, Shenyang Military Region, and Chengdu Military Region uneasy and disgruntled.¹⁵⁷ According to one senior PLA officer, “These military regions in southwest and northwest China challenged the policy guidelines that military preparations targeting Taiwan shall be the ‘dragon head’ or the primary focus and highest priority of the PLA’s military modernization.”¹⁵⁸ Jiang Zemin, in a 1999 speech in which he reviewed the CMC’s work from the previous year, said:

...accelerating military preparation and realizing the motherland's complete reunification is the remaining wishes of Chairman Mao and Comrade Xiaoping...The fuller military preparation we make, the stronger we are militarily...the more likely we realize peaceful reunification (with Taiwan)...Military preparation is the most realistic and the most pressing task. If that is well managed, we are then focusing on the right place and we are then grasping the 'dragon head' of our military modernization.¹⁵⁹

However, many officers of the Lanzhou Military Region and the Chengdu Military Region contested Jiang’s proposition, since they believed that security tensions in Xinjiang and the Sino-Indian border region posed threats equally serious to those from Taiwan and should have been treated as strategic directions for the PLA’s war preparations. These officers bitterly refuted any suggestion that the PLA should orient its war preparations around the Taiwan contingency, since in their view a better national security strategy would take a comprehensive view rather than fixating on lopsided planning.¹⁶⁰

The presence of inter-service rivalries has a number of implications: First, different military regions have divergent views on what strategic priorities should receive military preparation and fund allocation. Those inland-based military regions in southwest and northwest China, with mostly a land army, push for different strategic

priorities than those coastal military regions such as the Nanjing Military Region and the Fuzhou Military Region (with a large Navy and Air Force), and the Jinan Military Region, which houses the second-tier reserve troops that would be used during a possible conflict over Taiwan.

Second, if past successful experiences can be used as a barometer for future actions, the PLAN and PLAAF will strive to obtain more attention and greater funds by pursuing more outward-looking and expansive service strategies. As this competition between services unfolds, the services' differing style or culture, which arises out of their parochial interests, may have an impact on PLA behavior as a whole. For example, the PLAAF is the least experienced and open of the service branches in terms of interactions and substantial dialogues with the outside world. Therefore, it tends to formulate strategies and policies in isolation and under secrecy, which therefore lack sophistication and more easily draw criticism from the outside world. The PLAAF was deliberating whether to change its strategy in 2010-11 to include an "all Chinese air territory concept," in which the PLAAF strives to develop the capability to conduct air and space war-fighting over all Chinese air territory. The problem is that the PLAAF defined "all Chinese air territory" as encompassing the air and space above China's territorial land, waters, and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ).¹⁶¹ Before its intended official publication of this strategic concept, the PLAAF presented its strategy in an internal meeting, which for the first time included analysts from other services. Only one senior officer, outside of the PLAAF, opposed this concept during the meeting, urging that the MFA and National People's Congress be allowed to examine this concept. After further deliberation and consultation, the PLAAF dropped this "all Chinese air territory concept." Although the

PLAAF still talked about developing the capability to conduct war-fighting over all Chinese territory, it chose not to openly define what geographic area it is referring to.

Another example of the PLAN's and PLAAF's expanding influence is the development of the policy to declare and implement an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea, which the PLAAF and probably the PLAN had been deliberating for several years. However, Air Force officers in charge of the study had almost no interaction with countries that administered existing ADIZs. As a result, the PLAAF first got the concept wrong in the legal sense, designing it first for operations in the South China Sea, and in the end publicized a policy with little operational feasibility. The announcement and implementation of the policy also offended countries that would be affected by the ADIZ, including countries that are important to China such as South Korea, because they were not consulted prior to the announcement.¹⁶² The PLAN also has a more conservative culture than its Western counterparts. However, this conservatism is gradually changing, with the PLAN participating more in anti-piracy operations and sea-borne joint exercises with other navies.

How Does the PLA Make Decisions on Foreign and Security Policies?

Decision-making Chain for Contingencies Related to Foreign Countries

The GSD functions as the lead agency in any international security crisis involving the PLA. The GSD's Operations Division, or the 1st Division, undoubtedly undertakes the most important tasks in both planning and implementation. It has at least eight division-level (*shiji*) bureaus (including the Operation Planning Bureau, War Environment Bureau, Joint Operation Bureau, Operation Organization and Gaming

Bureau, Special Force Operation Bureau, Strategic Targeting Bureau, War Preparation Bureau, and Military Exercise Management Bureau) within which a wide array of functional issues are addressed.¹⁶³ There are additional agencies below these division-level bureaus that support their tasks. When Zhang Qinsheng headed the Operations Division, he added another string of new bureaus, including one intended to address non-traditional security threats. There are five Deputy Chiefs of the Operations Department – all major-generals – including one from the PLAN and one from the PLAAF. All five deputy chiefs of the Operations Department report directly to the Chief of the General Staff.

When any security crisis takes place, it is immediately handed to the relevant bureau(s) under the Operations Division for assessment, planning, and to propose solutions. The military intelligence apparatus (the 2nd and 3rd departments) would attend the preliminary assessment meetings (*wu xu hui*) and provide analysis on how this contingency and possible various solutions may affect other countries, and what reactions other relevant countries may have if the PLA takes certain measures. The bureau(s) subsequently will hold meetings of substance (*wu shi hui*) to decide what options are on the table and what they will suggest. Military intelligence does not attend this and subsequent stages. The bureau(s) will then recommend a set of options and measures. The bureau(s), with its/their respective expertise in issues it deals with, usually have a high level of autonomy in making suggestions on measures and countermeasures. The bureau's chief will present its opinions to the head of the Operations Division, who in most cases simply passes it on to the First Executive Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who is in charge of the Operations Division. If he endorses the plan (*fangan*), he will first

brief the Chief of the General Staff and then present it to the CMC's Vice Chairmen.¹⁶⁴

During a high-stakes contingency, or when war is a real possibility, the Chairman of the CMC, who is also typically the top leader of the Party, may circumvent the CMC Vice Chairmen and directly make a decision after receiving the report that lower-level officers at the Operations Department sent to the Chief of General Staff. However, such a sequence is rare and exceptional.

The Operations system has a direct and relatively short chain of command to reach the top. The military intelligence, primarily the GSD's Second and Third Departments, play a very important role, but in most cases only during the preliminary stage, and in general through their own routine reporting channels. The military intelligence's influence is also reflected in its channels to reach and influence the PBSC's members. It is capable of sending specific reports to selected PBSC members, whom it thinks would have an interest in a given issue and may be sympathetic to the PLA's view.¹⁶⁵ In cases containing very sensitive, top secret information, reports will be recalled once read by those PBSC members. The military intelligence has the prerogative to decide who has interests and stakes in its reports, and therefore who receives them.

The PLA's GPD is in charge of foreign propaganda, which means not only responsibility for the PLA's image to the outside world, but also who in the PLA should speak to the domestic and foreign media. The Chiefs of the GPD and GSD are regarded as the CMC's backbone, together with the two CMC Vice Chairmen, though their powers relative to each other fluctuate. Which bureaucracy inside the PLA is "the mighty unit," (*qiangshi danwei*) or is more powerful than the others, depends largely on who heads this bureaucracy and who keeps that bureaucracy as his power base.¹⁶⁶ GSD superseded GPD

in bureaucratic power particularly when it was headed by Luo Ruiqing, as well as during the Cultural Revolution, and for a majority of the time since 1978.¹⁶⁷ The exceptions to this were during the periods when Yang Baibing and Xu Caihou were in power. Over the past twenty years, the chiefs of the General Logistics Department (GLD) and the General Armament Department (GAD) were routinely candidates to become Chief of GSD and GPD. Such was the case with Zhang Zhen, Chief of the GLD (1978-80), who later became DCGS (1980-5), and Fu Quanyou, Director of the GLD (1992-5) who later became CGS (1995-2002). Additionally, Chen Bingde, the third Chief of the GAD (2004-7), was later named CGS (2007-12), and Li Jinai, Chief of the GAD from 2002-4, then became Director of GPD (2004-12). This is evidence that GPD and GSD chiefs supersede GLD and GAD chiefs in seniority.¹⁶⁸

In May 2006, Hu Jintao instructed the PLA, in an internal report distributed by *Xinhua News Agency*, to study seriously questions on “how to establish the PLA’s image, how to use the weapon of public opinion, and how to strengthen the PLA’s soft power.”¹⁶⁹ Hu’s instruction led to the issuance of a document in 2008 that established new guidelines for the PLA’s propaganda, which shifted the GPD from a passive posture to a more proactive and purposive campaign strategy, in order to improve the PLA’s image and soft power.¹⁷⁰ These new guidelines also established the all-military foreign propaganda leading small group, which was led by Liu Yongzhi, GPD’s deputy chief, though this group’s executive branches include a newly established Foreign Propaganda Bureau of GPD and the News Affairs Bureau under GSD. Since the establishment of this group, the GPD has become increasingly open and transparent. However, opinions transmitted through GPD-supported channels do not always reflect the thinking of GSD

or the PLA services. Those who are not appointed by GPD as “propaganda experts” may still accept interviews from media without seeking GPD’s approval, but could be harassed by GPD.¹⁷¹ Those who give voice to the hawkish views inside the PLA, such as Luo Yuan (a well-publicized figure), are largely dismissed inside the PLA.¹⁷² Such figures are dubbed the “angry youth” of the PLA, and allegedly receive support from the GPD’s “angry youth” segment, “though not representative of the overall GPD’s opinion.”¹⁷³

Services including the Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery often stand at the start and end of the decision chain. They do not have direct influence on the opinions shaped by the Operations Department, or decisions reached at the level of deputy chiefs and chief of GSD. However, they may alert and report on international security crises to GSD at the outset through each service headquarters. How they frame the situation and the problems, in addition to the other data and intelligence their own frontline troops provide, could have bearing on the GSD’s thinking and ultimate decisions. After the decision is made, orders go back through the decision chain in the reverse direction. GSD will then alert the relevant services to carry out the order. If services must consult or coordinate with one another, they would most likely go to GSD to express such a need. The different services rarely directly talk to each other when it concerns important operational issues.¹⁷⁴

Military regions have even less influence or an institutionalized presence in the decision-making chain. Occasionally, senior officers from military regions may speak up on a certain situation, yet they must do so with the knowledge that their opinions, if badly received, would negatively impact and could even end their careers. Therefore, senior

officers from military regions are more cautious in expressing their views during international security crises until they have some confidence in knowing the military leadership's thinking. These officers mostly will choose information channels, such as personal connections, to transmit their opinions upward.¹⁷⁵

Advisory Agencies on Foreign and Security Policies

Military Strategic Planning Committee and Military Strategic Planning Advisory Committee under the CMC

Under the CMC, the Military Strategic Planning Committee (MSPC) and the Military Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (MSPAC) are the official entities that study and advise the military leadership on the PLA's threat perception and how it should adjust its strategies, doctrine, and armament procurement in response. The MSPC is composed of the heads and decision-makers of departments who are relevant to the execution of any plan concerning the PLA's strategic planning. MSPAC has dozens of members, including academics whose work concerns military affairs, and top scientists and researchers in military sciences, including those who focus on cyber, informationization, strategy, and tactics.¹⁷⁶ Established around 2011, the two committees are headed by a deputy chief of general staff, first Qi Jianguo, and then his successor, Wang Guanzhong.

The PLA used to have a Military Informationization Committee (MIC), however, after the MSPAC was established, most members of the MIC were transferred to MSPAC. The Department of Strategic Planning, a second-level department under GSD, is the

executive office of these two committees. It is tasked with organizing MSPAC's meetings and work, and ensuring that MSPAC's advice is implemented.

MSPC has four main tasks: first, it conducts studies to "evaluate the home reserves" (*mo jiadi*) of the four general departments, pools all the findings together, and then advises on what to do; second, it studies the "dynamic integration" of the defense budget by examining how each year's defense budget is spent and how the new defense budget should be allocated; third, it studies and plans the future path of the PLA's development; lastly, it studies international affairs in order to advise on targets of and threats to the PLA.¹⁷⁷

Strategic Planning Department of the GSD

The Strategic Planning Department (SPD), a second-level department under GSD directed by an officer with a grade equivalent to army corps rank, was formally established in 2010 and was up and running by 2011.¹⁷⁸ It is an executive office of MSPC and MSPAC.

The purpose of this functional department is to design and coordinate the general planning and decision-making of the military, balance and coordinate departmental interests of the four general departments, and organize and draft plans to reform and plan the organizational structure of the PLA and the corresponding allocation of budgetary and military resources.

The real question is whether the PLA can manage to link strategic thinking with implementation. To meet the challenges of connecting armament development, the non-material aspects of army construction, and planning and trends in military affairs, the

department will need a diverse mix of personnel from across the PLA to reach the Chief of the General Staff and even the CMC as well as other general departments and services. However, SPD is an office with only a few dozen official staff and other officers seconded from other institutions.

First, the SPD, though having a seemingly broad strategic mandate with a grand vision, does not have the authority and structure to suit its intended purpose. The fact that it is a second-level department (*er ji bu*) under the GSD, which is one of the four general departments, makes it fated to be ineffective. The other three departments will not follow the instructions of a lower-level unit of the GSD, especially when those instructions touch on sensitive interests and resource allocation. As one senior researcher at the PLA's Academy of Military Sciences remarked, "In reality, the fact that such a department is put under the GSD, one of the four general departments, won't do the trick. Could a second-level department under GSD dictate how other subsidiary agencies under three other general departments and services work and in which direction they head?"¹⁷⁹

Second, in addition to the SPD not having high enough reach, it also does not have lower-level organizational reach. There are no SPD offices at lower levels of the military such as Military Regions, services, or corps (*jun*). A major weakness resulting from this arrangement is that the lower-level PLA organizations simply ignore any SPD instructions that do not fit their interests. SPD has too broad a mandate, along with a small budget and very few employees. It therefore heavily borrows talent, often from lower-level organizations or specialized institutions and military universities. Those who are willing to serve in SPD without an official capacity are often officers who are not on the promotion track and therefore are willing to take "sabbaticals" and work for SPD.

That means these personnel are probably lower quality and are not valued highly by the GSD's other departments or other general departments. This further adds to SPD's low morale, and increased difficulty in gaining cooperation from other departments to implement its policies. As one senior SPD officer remarked,

The SPD's biggest flaw is its lack of top-to-bottom offices to execute decisions and plans it has made. In other words, SPD doesn't have "legs." It could issue orders to the lower-level agencies of general departments or military regions. But it is a big question mark whether these agencies would listen to the SPD's opinions and enforce its orders. My experience working in SPD showed me that I had to use my own network to get things done.¹⁸⁰

Third, the SPD is alleged to be much more closed and parochial than the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) in interacting and consulting with non-military agencies and civilian experts, and having exposure to foreign militaries.¹⁸¹ SPD has difficulties recruiting either experts from other military agencies or civilian experts because: its official personnel quota is limited; it lacks the prerogative and resources to attract military strategists and experts as consultants, though it has the authority to invite junior officers to work in the office for months and even years; it lacks resources to pay civilian consultants with either adequate pay or by awarding them with any position or status in the military; and it worries that civilian consultants may not keep military secrets. SPD, therefore, has even more parochial worldviews and policy interests than the GSD's FAO.¹⁸²

Military Intelligence

The GSD's 2nd and 3rd departments are responsible for collecting intelligence and advising and consulting the military and political leadership. The military intelligence department's main task is to advise the top military chiefs in the CMC as well its Chairman, who is also general secretary of the Party. Depending on the content and

importance of the issue, the military intelligence department may directly advise the top political leader through his military secretary at his administrative office. The military intelligence department also has channels to send its reports to designated members of the PBSC whom the military believes are interested in these reports and powerful enough to influence the policy debate in a direction favorable to the intelligence department. Extremely sensitive policy reports may be sent to these selected members of the PBSC in a highly restricted manner and recalled after a limited time period.¹⁸³

Foreign Affairs Office of the GSD

The GSD's Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) has the reputation of being "barbarian handlers," shouldering the responsibility of consulting the PLA's various stake-holding agencies and advising the PLA leaders on foreign and security policies. In this respect, it is vastly different from its Western counterparts, especially its counterpart in the United States. The FAO is responsible for every aspect of military diplomacy, including approving and hosting any high-level military delegations to or from China. Additionally, it is often the lead agency to initiate, coordinate, and integrate various functional departments of the PLA and non-military government agencies concerned with PLA-involved foreign and security policies.

The FAO's role in influencing the PLA's foreign and security policy-making lies in its responsibility to provide strategic advisory to the PLA's internal policy deliberation mechanism. In other words, FAO is responsible for initiating (*qiantou*), narrating, agenda-setting, organizing the input of functional departments, advising on solutions they desire (*ding zhu diao*), and integrating opinions of all sides. It cannot dictate policies.¹⁸⁴

However, FAO officers, when tasked with policy advisory roles, are required to analyze what the problem is, explain what options are available to decision-makers, and which approach has the best chance of success. In this way, FAO officers play the role of policy analysts and narrators for the military leadership by framing the debate and setting the bounds of permissible or feasible policies. FAO acts as the lead agency that consults relevant functional departments in the military, and as a bridge that reaches out to non-military agencies. It also organizes inter-agency consultation and dialogues that involve various analysts pushing the consultation in a certain direction, and reaches a conclusion on whether and how the policy should be implemented. It has vast power to borrow talent from different units, including the National Defense University and the Academy of Military Sciences (AMS), as well as others inside the military, without worrying about adding personnel positions or finding the funds to pay for such personnel.¹⁸⁵

FAO's civilian consultants are mainly from the Ministry of State Security (MSS). Compared to the military intelligence officers, who compete with the MSS, FAO has a free hand in inviting experts from the MSS system to provide their opinions and analyses through internal seminars. Such MSS experts are usually viewed as being knowledgeable about foreign affairs, having wide exposure to the outside world, and are believed to generally take a balanced and moderate view. In contrast, the FAO has increasing interaction, but a problematic relationship, with the MFA's civilian experts. Very few experts and analysts from the MFA are invited to the military's internal seminars. There are more known cases wherein the MFA invited military scholars to their closed-door meetings, though most of those officers who attended such meetings either spoke little or had contentious conversations with MFA officials.¹⁸⁶

Military leaders cannot give direct orders based on their personal opinions. To turn their opinions into official PLA policy, as with the MFA, they have to follow strictly controlled procedures. However, this does not mean that military leaders, with strong personal preferences regarding certain policies and political clout, are unable to hijack the FAO in some cases, when they have strong personal preferences regarding certain policies. Such military leaders still have to go through the process of transforming their personal opinion into the opinion of the PLA. When FAO sends in reports seeking approval regarding policy recommendations that individual military leaders disagree on, these reports would be sent back to the FAO for revision. FAO would then analyze what this particular leader thinks and amend the report accordingly. Such reports, upon the CMC's approval, then turn this particular military leader's personal opinions into the PLA's organizational opinion (*jiguan yijian*).¹⁸⁷

CMC General Office

The CMC's General Office plays a supporting, secretarial, and liaison role, ranging from speech-writing to administrative tasks of organizing meetings and transferring documents from General Departments to CMC leaders. It is the "nerve center" of the CMC, akin to the General Office of the CCP Central Committee, though the director of the CMC's General Office has much more limited promotion potential compared to his counterpart in the Party system. One would imagine that the most convenient advice CMC leaders get should come from the CMC General Office. In reality, this is generally not the case. Li Jijun, Deputy Director of the CMC General Office in 1987, tried to make it an expanded entity with "more content" and "more

brain,” with the capacity to conduct research and advise other agencies. However, functional departments strongly resisted this reform, and therefore Li’s idea was never realized.¹⁸⁸ The CMC General Office has an in-house research branch, but it is understaffed and is rarely consulted during international security crises.

Personality Matters

What is described above is the PLA’s standard policy-making procedure. However, exceptions do exist during different conditions and at different times. In any bureaucracy, “people” or “personality” counts a great deal. Interviewees who work or have worked inside China’s government and military system repeatedly confirmed this.

For example, General Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff from 1996-2006, who was in charge of foreign affairs and intelligence, significantly elevated the role of intelligence in the decision-making process both in the military and in influencing the then top leader’s thinking, due to his intimate personal relationship with Jiang Zemin. In June-July 2013, the responsibility for military intelligence and foreign affairs was broken up and divided into portfolios of two deputy chiefs of general staff, even though traditionally they were both in one Deputy Chief of General Staff’s portfolio. Coinciding with this major change, military intelligence was instructed to only present objective analysis of the situation and not provide any advice. It is still unclear at this point why this happened, but it is reasonable to speculate that this shift represented a push-back against the military intelligence apparatus after Xiong’s years. The splitting of the military intelligence and the military’s foreign affairs portfolios ended in mid-2015, as evidenced when Sun Jianguo, the DCGS in charge of military intelligence, attended the

2015 Shangri-La Dialogue, a foreign affairs occasion. Sun's attendance signified the completion of the military intelligence system's adjustment.

General Ma Xiaotian, who oversaw foreign affairs and military intelligence after Xiong and Zhang Qinsong, provides more evidence for the truism that "personality matters." Ma Xiaotian, son of Senior Colonel Ma Zaiyao who served as the Provost of the PLA Political Academy, joined the Air Force cadets at age 16 and became the youngest Deputy Regiment Commander at age 25. His personality may reflect both his career as a pilot and his identity as a member of the so-called "second Red generation," though his father was a mid-ranking officer. General Ma's subordinates in FAO viewed Ma as "bright," "confident and strong-minded," "outspoken," "having his own mind," "sometimes seeing things in black and white," and "a typical Air Force pilot."¹⁸⁹ He neither paid attention to briefings given by subordinates, nor carefully read reports and talking points, but almost always spoke well on subjects he chose to address.¹⁹⁰ In comparison, General Qi Jianguo, a highly respected Army command officer who took over Ma's seat as the Deputy Chief of General Staff overseeing foreign affairs, was said to be more attentive to subordinates, as well as expert advice and briefings.

Circumstances When the PLA Will Not Consult the MFA

The above sections of this chapter explain what motivates the PLA to intervene in certain policy areas. Putting aside whether and how the PLA would achieve the level of influence it desires, the subject of discussion in Chapters Three through Six, these behaviors by the PLA are deliberate and intentional. However, the PLA's actions resulting from operational freedom and therefore military autonomy is arguably different

than “influence,” as influence has a deliberate purpose of making others do or refrain from doing certain things. The PLA’s action borne out of its operational procedure, however, is unintentional but nonetheless creates policy outcomes. Standard operational procedure is permitted based on what the military should do under certain circumstances out of military necessity and the civilian’s and military’s prior agreement concerning these type of actions. The following three areas are within the PLA’s military prerogative, in which the PLA would not consult with the MFA in principle:

First, when an issue is a part of the PLA’s core responsibilities and is a military prerogative, such as; armament research and development, weapons development, testing, and deployment, protection of China’s territory or patrols within China’s territory (including disputed areas), and most aspects of mil-to-mil relationships.¹⁹¹

Examples of the PLA exhibiting this behavior include China’s 2007 anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) test and the J-20 stealth fighter’s test flight during U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates’ visit to Beijing in 2011. The MFA was silent for 12 days following the PLA’s 2007 ASAT test, which made the outside world suspect that the MFA was kept in the dark before the test.¹⁹² The GAD conducted an in-house impact assessment before the test, but the assessment’s conclusion was redacted when the GAD sent the report to the CMC for approval. Hu Jintao, and possibly Wen Jiabao and a handful of non-military officials, were informed about the test in advance, without an explanation of what the GAD fully knew. A deputy chief of China’s Meteorological Administration was informed about technical aspects of the test and sought to provide technical assistance. However, the full picture of what this test was really intended for, and possible damage and international fallout, was not provided.¹⁹³

The case of the J-20 test flight during Secretary Gates' visit to China is more telling. From January 9-12, Gates visited China, marking the full restoration of U.S.-China military-to-military ties. As Gates' visit was used to demonstrate a thawed and improving Sino-U.S. military and political relationship before Hu Jintao's visit to the U.S. in 2011, Beijing tried its best to make sure his visit was a success. Given that Hu's previous visit to Washington was such a diplomatic disaster, and that Beijing abruptly cancelled Gates' planned visit in 2010, every step by planners in Beijing was taken with much consideration. Gates was given head-of-state treatment throughout his visit, a treatment China has rarely given to a visiting U.S. defense secretary. However, on the same day of Gates' planned meeting with Hu, a test flight of the J-20 stealth fighter was conducted. Even photos of the test flights appeared on Chinese Internet chat-rooms. Gates was furious about the test, interpreting it as a direct insult to himself and to the U.S. Gates even considered cancelling the rest of his visit to China.¹⁹⁴ Upon considering U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman's advice, Gates decided to proceed, but directly raised the issue with Hu during their January 11 meeting. Hu "seemed surprised when Gates spoke of the matter and questioned his colleagues down the line."¹⁹⁵ Gates noticed that an army officer, Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie, explained to Hu that it was a coincidence.¹⁹⁶ Gates concluded, "the Chinese civilians in the room had known nothing about the test."¹⁹⁷ Hu assured Gates later that the rollout had been a "previously scheduled scientific test."¹⁹⁸ A PLA officer who used to work for the GSD FAO confirmed Hu's explanation, stating,

The J-20 test flight was indeed scheduled before Gates' visit was scheduled. As a routine practice of weaponry testing, this wouldn't be communicated to the MFA. No one in the PLA FAO connected the dots either, as they were not on the line of communications on weaponry testing. The only peculiar part of this event was that most weaponry testing by

the defense industry would be classified and sealed from the outside world. But this is a rare case, as even photos leaked out.¹⁹⁹

Protection of China's territory is a more thorny area, as it includes areas that China clearly claims, but other countries dispute. On January 10, 2013, the PLA sent military planes to the vicinity of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, though they did not enter the 12 nautical mile territorial waters of the Islands. Officials in the MFA complained that they were not informed in advance about the PLA's actions.²⁰⁰ The PLA did indeed leave the MFA in the dark, but it justified this because it "considers the Diaoyu Islands as China's own territory, so there is no need for it to consult with the MFA when flying planes above its territorial waters."²⁰¹

Moreover, the PLA will not consult with the civilian foreign affairs system when it comes to operations following established routines in border patrols, military exercises, movements in China's EEZ to resist foreign military surveillance ships/airplanes,²⁰² anti-surveillance maneuvers against foreign military ships, submarines and airplanes, and contingency-based border sealing and blockades.²⁰³

Two examples illustrate this point. First, when the U.S. launched the Afghanistan War on October 8, 2001, the PLA ordered a massive border sealing operation along China's thousands-of-kilometer-long western border centered in Xinjiang, in order to prevent Taliban members and other terrorist elements from crossing into China. This operation was conducted without consulting the MFA, as it was well within the PLA's military mission. The troops conducting the operation were on first-degree alertness, while the Lanzhou Military Region and the Tibet Military Region were put on third-degree alertness. It was the largest and longest military operation on China's western border since the 1962 Sino-Indian border clash.²⁰⁴

Second, the PLA will not consult the MFA when it is implementing an existing policy, even when that policy constitutes a flashpoint with foreign countries. One constant friction between the PLA and the U.S. military has been close-in surveillance conducted by U.S. military ships, submarines or airplanes within China's EEZ. The U.S. performs such exercises in order to collect data on the Chinese military's capabilities, such as the frequency, intensity, technical characteristics, and technical parameters of the telecommunication and electronic equipment on Chinese warships and submarines, including radar or the balladromic course of some particular weapons system. As a routine military operation, the PLA will try to repel such surveillance activities, even though such military exercises are conducted beyond China's 12 nautical miles of territorial waters and are thus allowed under UNCLOS. Such tensions almost boiled over as recently as December 2013, when a PLAN vessel nearly collided with the USS Cowpens as it was conducting surveillance.

China's first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*, was on its way to its first deployment for a military drill in the South China Sea. The USS Cowpens (CG-63), a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, monitored the *Liaoning*'s deployment closely, though in international waters. On December 5, a PLAN ship made radio contact with the Cowpens, urging it to leave the area. When the Cowpens rejected the request, a PLAN amphibious dock ship suddenly crossed its bow at a distance of less than 500 meters and stopped in the water. The Cowpens was forced to take evasive action to avoid a collision.²⁰⁵ From the U.S. perspective, the incident took place in international waters and China's actions posed a challenge to freedom of navigation.²⁰⁶ A visiting senior PLA officer accused the Cowpens of "tailing the *Liaoning* and collecting data of the PLA's military drill at close

range,” saying “How could the PLA sit on its hands under this circumstance?! If this happens again, we will do the same.”²⁰⁷

Third, the PLA will not consult with the civilian foreign affairs system when its local units believe they are being provoked by foreign opponents and launch a tit-for-tat response. The military’s tenet, under which “the authority of firing shots lies in the hands of the CMC, but the authority of firing shots back is in the hands of the Fleet,” as explained by a senior PLAN officer, is revealing about how this tit-for-tat operational procedure, which applies to every service, works in the PLA.²⁰⁸ The PLA border troops would conduct retaliatory patrols or proportional reactions if, for example, the Indian military takes provocative actions by patrolling one mile further into the disputed area.²⁰⁹ Officers at the lowest level will follow this tactic without thinking about whether they need to get approval from supervising units or the MFA. It won’t matter to them whether China and the opponent are having a very tense relationship, or whether their actions will escalate such tensions.

The 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff and the intensified Sino-Japanese dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands after Japan’s nationalization of the island chain indicate a new line of thinking regarding escalatory punishment — if the opponent breaks the status quo first and moves one inch, we will not only retaliate, but will also respond by going an inch and a half. This new model of thinking has not been locked in as a replacement for the PLA’s tit-for-tat practice, but has garnered increasingly strong support.²¹⁰

In the above three scenarios, in cases when the MFA raises serious concerns to the top leader and disputes the PLA’s routine operations/patrols, the PLA won’t change

its practice unless all of the following conditions are met: the CMC explicitly accepts the MFA's grievances, new and clear instructions are given, and these new instructions are uniformly understood and can be operationalized.²¹¹

Although civilian actors can hardly alter the PLA's behaviors within its operational freedom, which sets in motion like an automatic machine, such behaviors do not indicate that the PLA runs amok, as its operational freedom has limits that are set in within its operational procedure. Exceptions may occur, resulting from individual officers' choices and actions, which are subject to penalty once detected and determined. However, exceptions should not prove the rule. The PLA is by and large a professionally-trained military, in which military effectiveness is built on the foundation of obedience to rules and orders. For example, during the EP-3 incident in 2001, Zhao Yu, the other pilot in the air, requested to shoot down the EP-3 after Wang Wei's fighter crashed, but was rejected by the command on the ground. Zhao requested again and the command rejected it again. Zhao finally followed orders and returned.²¹²

Conclusion

The PLA is a professional military with some peculiar characteristics. It is also a military force in transition, with dynamics that could greatly impact the PLA's likelihood to intervene in or refrain from China's foreign and security policy-making process.

The debate about whether the PLA should focus more on internal or external threats has not concluded in the PLA. The very subject could still arouse great differences and strong feelings in both camps. The trends nevertheless demonstrate that the PLA will become much more outward-oriented or outward-looking over the coming years, though

it is still largely an inward-oriented or inward-looking military focused on China's internal challenges. An increasingly outward-oriented PLA is more likely to be open to military-to-military interactions, engage in burden-sharing, and take on non-combat responsibilities overseas. Though an increasingly outward-oriented PLA may be more pleasant to deal with on a daily basis, it could be a more lethal opponent under certain conditions.

The PLA is surely undergoing professionalization, though the disruptive force of politicization will be present for a long time because the system of politicization is upheld not only by the Party, but also by organized interest groups headed by the GPD. Politicization will continuously weaken the PLA's efforts at professionalization and create an institutionalized disconnect between the PLA and the government. Professionalization, the dominant side of this dynamic, is a double-edged sword as it elevates the principle of civilian centrality, but makes the PLA more budget-conscious, "no-war anxious" (anxious about military inertia and its potential lack of military effectiveness since it has not fought a war in over three decades), and possibly more welcoming to continuous frictions and even provoking a war in which there is a high probability of winning.

The rise of inter-service rivalry, though it shouldn't be exaggerated, is increasingly an important factor affecting the PLA's behavior in foreign policy. Inter-service rivalry over the past two decades was reflected more through the differences between inland-based and coastal-oriented military regions over the PLA's core mission.

On the policy side, the PLA is primarily concerned about two types of issues: those that pose existing and potential military threats, and territorial-based ones. The PLA

as a whole is a territorial animal that vigilantly guards what is happening within and immediately around China's borders, as well as around its immediate periphery. As a secondary concern, the PLA also cares about strategic assets that could grant it a significant geopolitical advantage.²¹³ In summary, the PLA is more strongly motivated by policies and actions of substantive military utility/threat than about issues that address hollow political values.

Despite internal differences and debates, as a bureaucracy that has a shorter, less hierarchical decision-making chain than its flatter and more cumbersome civilian foreign affairs system, the PLA may reach a decision more quickly during crises. This may allow the military to gain an advantage in how an issue is initially framed, when the PLA deems it necessary to do so.

¹ 1978 is chosen as the starting point of this study because that was basically the start of Deng's era and the eve of the 1979 Sino-Vietnam border war.

² In February 1944, the CCP issued the "Instruction of Inspecting the Work of Supporting Government, Loving the People, Supporting Troops." It stipulated, "our military is a military under the CCP leadership, which comes from the people, belongs to the people and serves the people."

³ Sanderson Beck, *East Asia 1800-1949: Ethics of Civilization* (Goleta, CA: World Peace Communications, 2008).

⁴ As the CCP's forces experienced serious setbacks in 1941-42 against the Japanese army, local militia and armed peasants expanded drastically in the CCP-controlled areas. For example, in the Jinan (South Hebei) anti-Japanese base area, the proportion of militia and CCP forces changed from 77:100 in 1941 to 200:100 in late 1942. In the Jinsui (Shanxi) Anti-Japanese base area, the militia and armed peasants grew from 102,000 to 400,000.

⁵ Mao likened the Eighth Route Army to "fish" and the people to "water." He believed that "fish" must "swim in water in order to gain great strength." See Xu Yan, *Mao Zedong: A Military Strategist*, *zhong yang wen xian chu ban she*, 1995.

⁶ *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. II, pp. 439-538.

⁷ From 1993 to 2003, the PLA led and participated in more than 60,000 disaster-relief operations, deploying a total of 13 million officers. See Zhang Tianrong (ed.), *Study of Key Issues in Military Sociology*, *jun shi ke xue yuan chu ban she*, 2006, p. 172. The PLA's leading role in China's disaster relief operations is explained as a conscious and concrete way for it to prove its nature and purpose as a people's army. See Wang Shoufu and Zhang Zhanwei, "Accomplishments and Historic Lessons of the PLA's Disaster-relief Operations Since the Founding of PRC," *jun shi li shi*, Issue 4 (2007).

⁸ Qin Jin is Wu Faxian's daughter. See Qiu Jin, *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

⁹ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rises Up*.

¹⁰ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, p. 227.

¹¹ "The PLA is a fighting team forever. Even after (we achieved) victory nationwide, our military is still a fighting team. But the PLA is also a work team. As combat is gradually declining, the role of a work team

(for the PLA) will increase. Another possibility: in the very near future, the PLA will all turn into a work team. We must evaluate this possibility. The 53,000 cadres heading south will not be enough for the enormous new territory we are going to occupy. We must prepare to turn all of the 2.1 million field army into a work team.” Mao Zedong, “Report on the second meeting of the 7th Central Committee of the CCP in 1949,” Mao Zedong’s Selected Works, Volume IV, (Beijing: *renmin chubanshe*, 1991), p. 1426.

¹² Mao Zedong, “Report on the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the CCP,” March 5, 1949, Mao Zedong’s Selected Works, Volume IV (Beijing: *renmin chubanshe*, 1991), available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/66618/4488985.html>.

¹³ During the Cultural Revolution, the military was ordered to “support the leftist movement” and took over the power of governance from collapsed governments at almost all levels, as well as crucial functional areas such as transportation, aviation, communications, and ports. In 1976, the PLA stood firmly by Marshal Ye Jianying and Hua Guofeng, Mao’s designated successor, and arrested the radicals known as the “Gang of Four.”

¹⁴ When talking about the importance of conscription and institutionalizing the military organization and training, the PLA’s missions include “building a very strong and modernized national defense force, so strong that it could strike back any invader,” according to Zhu De. In a later speech, Zhu De added “protecting world peace” as another mission for the PLA, in addition to safeguarding China’s “peaceful construction.” See Liu Guoxin, “Analysis of Zhu De’s National Security Thinking in Early Days after Founding of the PRC,” *dang de wen xian*, Issue 1 (2008).

¹⁵ Peng Dehuai, “Work for Modernization of the PLA,” September 18, 1956, *Peng Dehuai’s Selected Military Writings*.

¹⁶ Article 20, Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (1954), Adopted on September 20, 1954, available at: http://www.npc.gov.cn/wxzl/wxzl/2000-12/26/content_4264.htm; Article 29, Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, Adopted on December 4, 1982, available at: <http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>.

¹⁷ “(1) providing an important guarantee of strength for the Party to consolidate its ruling position, (2) providing a strong security guarantee for safeguarding the period of important strategic opportunity for national development, (3) providing a powerful strategic support for safeguarding national interests, and (4) playing an important role in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.”

¹⁸ The characterization of the PLA’s inward- and outward-oriented personalities results from the author’s interviews with several senior PLA officers from 2011-13.

¹⁹ The character traits summarized about inward-oriented and outward-oriented officers came from the author’s interviews with 138 PLA officers.

²⁰ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2011.

²¹ Another senior PLA officer, in a 2012 interview, reflected a similar sentiment by saying, “The biggest worry on my mind (now) is the bankruptcy of my pension plan when the military becomes collateral damage to China’s fall.” Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

²² Among the more than 100 active-duty and retired PLA officers interviewed, some are in charge of military training and education, and therefore understand the minds of a much larger group of PLA officers. The conclusion I make below is based not only on my interviews, but also on the evaluations of these military educators.

²³ This study was to explore how to apply the Singapore model to China’s case.

²⁴ Interview with a retired PLA officer, 2013.

²⁵ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

²⁶ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Zhang Musheng, “Analysis of Political Reform Practice and Anti-corruption Path-finding for the Past Year,” *Phoenix TV*, October 19, 2014, available at: http://www.21ccom.net/articles/china/ggcx/20141019114903_all.html.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

³¹ Chinese liberal intellectuals have long established the consensus that the lack of political system reform has led to rampant corruption in the government. See Yu Keping, “Only Political Reform Could Effectively

Curb Corruption and Misuse of Power,” *People’s Daily*, November 22, 2012, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/1122/c40531-19658440-2.html>; Zheng Jiaming, “Only Political Reform Could Curb Serious Corruptions,” *gong shi wang*, May 29, 2012, available at: http://www.21ccom.net/articles/gsbh/article_2012052960719_2.html. Most military scholars agreed with this consensus, but rarely publicized their view to the outside world. In recent years, some military scholars have started to speak out publicly on this subject. Xin Ziling, a retired senior colonel of National Defense University, warned that China would “greet another Xinhai Revolution (the 1911 Revolution) if it continues to delay the political system reform” and “misses the opportunity of peaceful transition.” See transcript of a conference commemorating the anniversary of Xie Tao’s death, September 24, 2011, available at <http://www.chinainperspective.com/ArtShow.aspx?AID=12606>. Gongfang Bin, a professor at National Defense University, pointed out that the lack of progress regarding political system reform has led to the accumulation of social conflicts and the surge in civil unrest, despite China’s vibrant economic development in recent decades. See Gongfang Bin, “Policy-making in China: Deep-level Reflections on Contemporary Political Problems,” *zhongguo gongren chubanshe*, 2013. Interviews conducted by the author showed significant vocal criticism by both retired and active-duty PLA officers against the lack of progress of China’s political system reform.

³² These seven generals are Zhang Aiping, Ye Fei, Yang Dezhi, Xiao Ke, Li Jukui, Chen Zaidao, and Song Shilun. Luo Diandian, daughter of General Luo Ruiqing, wrote a letter to dozens of full generals, urging the PLA troops not to be sent into Beijing. Marshals Xu Xiangqian and Nie Rongzhen declined. But seven others responded and signed the appeal on May 22, 1989. An investigation was led by the Central Advisory Commission. None of the seven generals regretted their actions. General Yang Dezhi not only admitted signing this letter with six others, but also said that he wrote a separate letter himself, expressing the same message.

³³ Michael D. Swaine in his 1992 study pointed out, “PLA officers under the age of 50 in leadership posts below the highest group army level,” therefore officers born after 1942, were probably those “strongly committed to continued military and economic modernization, uncertain about the continued validity of one-party rule, probably critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the west.” See Swaine, *Military and Political Succession in China*.

³⁴ In addition to “an elitist value system,” Kolkowicz identified four other common characteristics of military establishments: institutional closure, detachment from the rest of society, a hierarchical structure of authority, and limited possibilities for employing the soldier’s professional skills in civilian life. See Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 323.

³⁵ Ironically, this trend was reversed after China’s reform and opening up, as more lucrative jobs were created for promising young people in the civilian economy. PLA officers from the 1950s to 1980s liked sending their children to the military. By the 1990s, however, PLA officers were reluctant to send their children to the military, as they could send their children to study and live abroad. Therefore, beginning in the 1990s the army’s recruits have been composed mostly of rural residents, or *nong cun bing*.

³⁶ In 1955, PLA officers’ base salary was 82.3 percent higher than that of civil servants at a similar administrative level, while in 1965 PLA officers’ base salary was 68.8 percent higher than that of civil servants at a similar administrative level. See Liu Shuyun, “The Adjustment and Guidance of Soldier’s Interests Under Market Economy,” master’s thesis at Wuhan University, May 2005.

³⁷ Examples can be found in General Liu Yazhou, son-in-law of former Chinese president Li Xiannian, and Chen Xiaolu, son of Marshal Chen Yi and son-in-law of General Su Yu, who served in the PLA in the 1980s and joined China’s Political Reform Research Office in 1986-89.

³⁸ Liu Yazhou, “Belief and Moral: A Speech Liu Gave to Officer Corps in Kunming,” 2002.

³⁹ See reference 28.

⁴⁰ The first generation of PLA officers perceived themselves as “children of the people,” an army that comes from the people, belongs to the people, and serves the people. After the PRC’s founding in 1949, the reality was that PLA officers enjoyed a relatively higher standard of living, segregated in their garrisons and military compounds, and stayed relatively separate from the radical political campaigns that swept most of Chinese society in the 1950s to 1970s.

⁴¹ Xin Ziling, a controversial professor at PLA National Defense University, wrote in his book: “Both the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are vicious developments of Mao Zedong’s violent

socialism. In the three years during the Great Leap Forward, 37.5 million people starved to death and China suffered a loss of 120 million yuan. In the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, according to what Ye Jianying said during the closing ceremony of the CCPCC working session on December 13, 1978, 100 million Chinese were attacked and persecuted, among whom 20 million died, and China lost 800 billion yuan of national revenues while, according to Li Xiannian's speech at the National Planning Meeting on December 20, 1977, 1.3 trillion yuan of expected revenues (projected during normal times) were never achieved. From the time when the New China was founded till Mao Zedong's death in 1976, China suffered economic damage totaling nearly 1.4 trillion yuan. (In comparison,) the total of China's investment in all infrastructure construction in those 30 years (after 1949) totaled only 650 billion yuan. The damage of the two political torments reached more than twice as much as China's total infrastructure investment in 30 years. That means more than two-thirds of the precious funds that could have been used to build the country and improve people's well-being were squandered by Mao Zedong (with his political campaigns). That is the total grade point of Mao Zedong, who used class struggles to rule the country." See Xin Ziling, Hong Taiyang de Yunluo: Qianqiu Gongzui Mao Zedong [The Fall of the Red Sun: The Successes and Failures of Mao Zedong] (Hong Kong: Shuzuofang Press, 2007). This book not only provided a cool-headed evaluation of Mao's era, but also put forward prescriptions about China's future political reform. Xin believed that China should change from Communism into Democratic Socialism, transform the CCP into a Democratic Socialist Party, and remove any individual's name from the Party constitution. Xin's book was highly acclaimed by Li Rui, Former Executive Deputy Minister of the CCPCC's Organization Department, Mao Zedong's former secretary and one of the leading figures advocating for China's political reform. Li Rui, in a review of Xin's book, wrote, "The History Decision reached in the 1980 meeting, in which more than 4,000 senior officials, led by Deng Xiaoping, officially reviewed the past history under Mao Zedong, was the start of a mistake. The Decision only focused on addressing the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution, but did not fundamentally deny Mao Zedong's path of utopia socialism." According to Li Rui, Deng Xiaoping himself confessed that this was a mistake in the extended meeting of the PBSC in January 1993, but Deng believed a full evaluation of Mao should be made by the "next generation at the start of the 21st Century." See Deng Xiaoping's speech at the extended meeting of the PBSC in Shanghai Xiojiao Hotel, January 15, 1993.

⁴² Interview with a former interpreter of Deng Xiaoping, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁴³ See Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao* and Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China*.

⁴⁴ See "Comrade Deng Xiaoping Paid Close Attention to the PLA Daily's Discussion in 1978," *PLA Daily*, August 22, 2014.

⁴⁵ Even though China's whirlwind politics bent everyone's knees in the 1950s-70s, compared to the civilian society, a significant segment of the PLA officer corps was against radicalization and spoke truthfully about China's internal policy failures. The most evident example was Marshal Peng Dehuai, then Defense Minister, who spent time extensively surveying China's rural regions and then spoke against Mao and the Great Leap Movement publicly. Marshals Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, and Xu Xiangqian, and others spoke against "chaos-making" and warned the military not to participate in the radical movements such as power seizure. The military's resistance against the 1967 power seizure campaign reversed Mao's most radical move and as a result, the PLA acquired substantial power in both the center and the provinces. A more recent example of honesty and courage is Major General Jiang Yanyong, a retired military doctor who publicly contradicted the lies of China's Minister of Health and exposed China's SARS crisis in 2003, who earned the moniker, "China's conscience." When asked why he chose to speak out truthfully to the public, Jiang replied: "If I chose silence, many more would have contracted (SARS) and more would have died. So I (must speak out) for (China's) national interest, and for the interest of (Chinese) people... I always think that people's lives are the most important, just as telling the truth." See Li Jing, "Jiang Yanyong: Interest of People Stands above Everything Else," *sanlian shenghuo zhouban*, Issue 23 (2003), available at: <http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2003/0729/5582.shtml>.

⁴⁶ The PLA's detachment from China's economic life made it a possible observer and critic rather than an interest group and stakeholder of the existing power structure.

⁴⁷ Many PLA officers interviewed by the author emphasized 2008-09 as a tipping point in their worry about China's stability because of massive civil unrest during this period. China had a series of violent incidents in 2008, marked by: the Wen'an Incident in Guizhou in June 2008, which led to the burning of 160 offices

and 42 police cars and injuries to 150 people; the Menglian Incident in Yunnan Province in July 2008, which led to two deaths, injuries to 41 policemen; the Longnan Incident in Gansu Province in November, which led to the burning of 110 houses and 22 vehicles; and strikes by tens of thousands of taxi drivers in Sichuan, Hainan, Gansu, Yunnan and Guangdong provinces in November 2008. Other incidents of civil unrest in 2008 included riots in Huizhou of Guangdong, civil unrest in Lijiang of Yunnan Province over environmental disputes, police-civilian confrontations in Fugu of Shaanxi Province, teacher strikes in September-October in Sichuan Province, and land seizure disputes in Langfang of Hebei Province. More incidents can be found in a collection in *Outlook Magazine*. See Zhang Zhiyun, "Civil Unrests That Shocked China in 2008," *Outlook Magazine*, December 22, 2008, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2008-12/22/content_10541266.htm.

⁴⁸ Interview with an active-duty officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

⁴⁹ An active-duty senior PLA officer also warned in 2013, "China faces such a grave threat of internal instability because of problems in its economic and political system caused by special interest groups that any dispute like those in the East China Sea and South China Sea should and can wait." Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁵⁰ This ex-PLA officer proposed that over a trial period, China should launch 50 democratic special zones and the PLA should play a role entirely of maintaining internal security and Constitutional governance. Interview with an ex-PLA officer who worked in the CMC in the 1980s, Beijing, 2013.

⁵¹ Those with foreign language capabilities are mostly PLA civilians who are active-duty officers, but often perform specialist functions, or so-called *wenzhi ganbu*. These officers are promoted much more slowly than command-track officers (*junzhi ganbu*) and in only rare cases are promoted higher than major general or rear admiral. Those who are on a relatively faster promotion-track are command-track officers who are evaluated based on their performance in military units, which normally focuses on narrow issues of training. Interview with PLA officers specializing in military training and evaluation, 2013 and 2014.

⁵² See Liu Hongtao, "Study of Commanding Officer Rotation," Ph.D dissertation, PLA Nanjing Political Academy, April 2007, p. 38. Being chosen to study at the PLA NDU's commander class often means that these officers are favorably evaluated by their superiors, are deemed to possess great potential, and thus are good prospects for further promotions.

⁵³ Interview with a senior active-duty officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁵⁴ After China regained its seat in the UN in 1971, the PLA followed a policy of "don't vote, don't contribute, and don't send officers" to UN peace-keeping operations (PKOs) in the 1970s and 1980s. This policy started to change in the late 1980s. China joined the UN Peacekeeping Operations Special Commission in 1988 and started to send officers to PKOs in 1990. In 2001, China's Ministry of Defense established a PKO Office, symbolizing the PLA's deep engagement in PKOs. The PLA sent more than 2,000 military personnel to participate in 11 PKOs in 2012, which makes China the largest donor nation among the P5 in terms of personnel contribution to PKOs. See Li Yun and Qin Wei, "Why We Send Military Observers: A Special Interview with PKO Expert Jiang Zhenxi," *China Youth Daily*, September 7, 2012, available at: http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2012-09/07/nw.D110000zgqnb_20120907_3-09.htm.

⁵⁵ QQ is an instant messaging service, one of the most popular Internet tools used by Chinese.

⁵⁶ Weibo is equivalent to Twitter, and has twice as many users as Twitter.

⁵⁷ Liao Guoliang (ed.), *History of the Development of Mao Zedong Military Thought* (Beijing: PLA Press, 1991), p. 539; Yuan Dejin, "Mao Zedong and the Thought of Fighting an Early, Large Scale and Nuclear War," *junshi lishi*, Issue 5 (2010), pp. 1-6, available at: <http://www.hprc.org.cn/pdf/JSL5201005004.pdf>.

⁵⁸ The PLA's operational doctrine from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s was "active defense and gaining mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck" ("积极防御、后发制人") to target the U.S. as the main threat; this doctrine evolved to "some resistance and some release of the enemy, luring the enemy in deep, exterminate the enemy in depth of the battlefield" ("有顶有放，诱敌深入，纵深歼敌") to respond to joint military threats from the U.S., Soviet Union, India, and the Nationalists on Taiwan. From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, to respond to the Soviet Union's threat in northern China, the PLA's doctrine changed to "active defense and luring the enemy in the deep" ("积极防御，诱敌深入"), which was later altered to just "active defense." From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the PLA's operational doctrine changed to "stabilizing the northern line, reinforcing the southern line, consolidating the border protection, and exploring the strategic potential of the ocean" ("稳定北线，加强南线，强边固防，经略海洋") to

correspond to Deng's judgment that "a great war won't be fought in the near future." In the early 1990s, the center of military preparations (military strategy) was shifted to winning "local wars under modern high-technology conditions" and the PLA's doctrine changed to "detering wars and winning wars" ("遏制战争、打赢战争"). After 2000, the center of military preparations was redefined to winning "local wars under informationized conditions," and the PLA's doctrine became "handling contingencies, safeguarding peace, and winning wars" ("应对危机、维护和平、打赢战争"). See Zhang Qinsheng, "General Zhang Qinsheng on Thinking of Active Defense," *xue xi shi bao*, July 18, 2011, available at:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2011-07/18/c_121682519_5.htm.

⁵⁹ Su Yu presented this thinking through an important report entitled, "Investigation of Several Issues on Combat Methods in Future Counter-aggression War," in the *PLA Academy of Military Sciences* on January 11, and CCP Central Party School on January 13, 1979. This report was partially publicized by Military Academics in Issue 3 (1979) of *junshi xueshu zazhi*, and then in *PLA Daily* on May 15, 1979.

⁶⁰ Su Lide and Ma Hongjun, "China Abandoned Military Strategic Guideline of 'Enticing Enemies to Our Hinterland,'" *PLA Daily*, November 26, 2008, available at: <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2008-11-26/0705531833.html>.

⁶¹ Jiang Nan and Ding Wei, "Evolution of China's Strategic Guidance in the Anti-aggression War during the Cold War," *Military History Journal*, Issue 1 (2013); David Shambaugh, p. 62.

⁶² The PLA's new military strategy of winning "local wars under modern and high-tech conditions" was coined by Jiang Zemin in January 1993 in his talk at the extended meeting of the CMC. See *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol. 1 (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 290; Although Hu established it as the PLA's military strategy, this goal was first voiced by Jiang in April 2004. See *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol. 3, p. 608.

⁶³ High altitude long endurance unmanned aerial vehicles, such as the RQ-4 Global Hawk flown by the U.S. Air Force, developed by Northrop Grumman, have achieved a flight-hour milestone by flying more intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission hours in one week in 2013 for the U.S. government than ever before – 781 hours. See Richard Tomkins, "Global Hawks achieve flight-hour record," *UPI*, January 8, 2015, available at: http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2015/01/08/Global-Hawks-achieve-flight-hour-record/1541420700464/#ixzz3OIh5wdGU.

⁶⁴ Chen Guangwen, "From Defense to Offense: Building China's Air Force in 60 Years," *World of Aviation Magazine (hang kong shi jie)*, October 29, 2009.

⁶⁵ General Zhang Qinsheng, "Theory of active Defense Shines Forever," *Study Times (xue xi shi bao)*, July 18, 2011, Available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-07/18/c_121681556_2.htm.

⁶⁶ Liu Huaqing defined "near seas" as within and around the first island chain; See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir* (Beijing: jiefangjun chubanshe, 2004); Far seas operation capability in this context refers to capabilities "to operate effectively for control of the seas within its own region," and "capabilities to project power beyond its own region and compete effectively for sea-control and impose sea-denial in the seas of the other oceans, as did the British Navy during the Falklands War," according to Nan Li. See Nan Li, "Evolution of Strategy: From 'Near Coast' to 'Far Seas,'" in Philip C. Saunders, Christopher Yung, Michael Swaine, and Andrew Nien-dzu Yang (eds.), *The Chinese Navy: Expanding Capabilities, Evolving Roles*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011), available at:

<http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/chinese-navy.pdf>, p. 139; In December 2001, Jiang Zemin urged the PLAN to "in the long run pay attention to enhancing the far-seas defense and operations capabilities." Hu Jintao took this one step further, instructing the PLAN "to make the gradual transition to far-seas defense, enhancing the far-seas maneuvering operations capabilities." See Wang Zhigang, "Navy is an important force to safeguard the expansion of China's national interests," *PLA National Defense University Journal*, Issue 10 (2005); Chen Xuesong and Du Kai, "China's sea power concept and the Navy's building," *Military History Journal*, Issue 4 (2008); Hu Bo, *China's Sea Power Strategy: Diplomacy, Oceanic Economy and Sea-borne Force* (Beijing: Xinhua Press, 2011).

⁶⁷ "PLA Air Force's 60 Years of Legend," *China News Agency*, November 17, 2009.

⁶⁸ Yao Yijing, "Space Cannot Be 'Dangerous Skylight' Above China: An Interview with General Xu Qiliang, Commander of PLAAF," *Southern Weekend*, November 22, 2009, available at: <http://www.infzm.com/content/37245>.

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- ⁶⁹ State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, "China's National Defense in 2008," January 20, 2009, available at: http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_16.htm.
- ⁷⁰ Yan Hao, "Fighting in Air, Space: PLA's Air Force Eyes Combination of Offensive, Defensive Strategy," *Xinhua News*, October 1, 2010, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-10/01/content_12147348.htm.
- ⁷¹ "China's Air Force Developing Air-Space Warfare Capability," *China Radio International*, November 6, 2009.
- ⁷² "Dai Xu: PLA Air Force Shall Incept Enemies Four Thousands Kilometers Away," *special interview by Sina.com*, November 9, 2009, available at: http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2009-11-09/1216573128_2.html.
- ⁷³ Zhang first raised this concept in 1998. A full explanation of this concept can be found at: Zhang Wenmu, "Sea Power and China's Strategic Choices," *China Security*, Summer 2006, pp.17-31.
- ⁷⁴ A. T. Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1918), pp. 148-9.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with a PLA officer, 2014.
- ⁷⁶ Rural recruits tend to demonstrate tendencies such as a herd mentality, rarely questioning authority, and a lack of understanding and interest in foreign affairs, according to multiple interviews with PLA officers involved in military training and evaluation conducted in 2011, 2013, and 2014.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.
- ⁷⁸ Joffe, "Party-Army Relations," pp. 299-314; Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981*.
- ⁷⁹ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles*.
- ⁸² Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army after Mao*.
- ⁸³ Joffe, "Party-Army Relations," pp. 299-314.
- ⁸⁴ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, pp. 7-18.
- ⁸⁵ Joffe believed that the worries that professionalization would weaken the Party's leadership in the PLA led to repeated political campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s to strengthen the Party's political control over the military. See Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-1964* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); There was once opposition against professionalization during the 1980s on the grounds that "professionalization of the PLA officers will lead to 'detachment of PLA officers from politics.'" However, the internal debate was concluded with a consensus that "professionalization of military officers...could serve not only the politics of capitalism but the politics of socialism." See Wang Fa'an, *Strategy of Strengthening the Military in China's Peace and Development*, (Beijing: PLA Press, 2013), pp. 228-49.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ You Ji, "China: From Revolutionary Tool to Professional Military," in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Military Professionalism in Asia: Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives* (Honolulu, HI: East West Center, 2001), pp. 111-35.
- ⁸⁸ You Ji, "The roadmap of upward advancement for PLA leaders," presented for the International Conference Elites and Governance in China (Taipei, Department of Political Science, National Chengchi University, November 6-7, 2010), pp. 1-32.
- ⁸⁹ *Contemporary Military Affairs of China: Volume II*, *zhong guo she hui ke xue chu ban she* (China Social Sciences Press), 1989, p. 221.
- ⁹⁰ *Contemporary Political Affairs of China: Volume I*, *dang dai zhong guo chu ban she* (Contemporary China Press), 1994, p. 480.
- ⁹¹ Wang Fa'an, *Strategy of Strengthening the Military in China's Peace and Development*, p. 226.
- ⁹² Ibid, p. 227.
- ⁹³ "Regulations on the Appointment and Removal of the PLA Officers in Active Service" (Article 41), *PLA Daily*, January 15, 2002, available at: <http://gaige.rednet.cn/c/2008/08/21/1578364.htm>.
- ⁹⁴ Liu Hongtao, "Study of Commanding Officer Rotation," Ph.D dissertation, PLA Nanjing Political Academy, April 2007, p. 38.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Interview with a PLA officer who specializes in PME studies, 2013.

⁹⁷ Therefore, accreditation of military universities was often inflated when unqualified military academies were elevated to military universities without the same strict screening and evaluation process imposed on equivalent civilian universities. China's advanced education system is composed of two-year professional schools, three-year colleges, and four-year universities, as well as "key" universities, based on academic accomplishments and the quality of education. However, in the PLA's military education system, many military educational institutions are generously categorized given their sub-standard quality.

⁹⁸ See Liu Hongtao, "Study of Commanding Officer Rotation," pp. 40-1.

⁹⁹ The Chinese university system is mostly merit-based. Those who enter prominent universities have to pass the university entrance exams with high scores. However, students who willingly promise to join the military after their university education are financially sponsored by the PLA to study in prominent civilian universities, despite their relatively poor performance on university entrance exams.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with PLA officer who specializes in PME studies, 2013.

¹⁰¹ Yang Dezhi was the longest-tenured CGS, serving for seven years and eight months.

¹⁰² Zeng Qinghong, Jiang Zemin's close associate, is alleged to have set this rule in 2002 as a tactic to force Li Ruihuan's retirement, Jiang's political opponent. The PBSC members originally had an age limit of 70 years old after 1997, a rule also set by Zeng. After 2002, PBSC members have to be 67 years old or younger to stay on during the transitional period. Those who are 68 years old have to retire. The PLA's own leadership transition process inherited this rule.

¹⁰³ See "Law for Active-duty Officer of People's Republic of China," reprinted in the *State Council Newsletter*, Issue 5 (2001), pp. 16-21.

¹⁰⁴ War-fighting considerations probably also factor into the selection of the four CGSs, with Zhang Wannian from the Guangzhou Military Region, Fu Quanyou, Liang Guanglie, and Chen Bingde all from the Nanjing Military Region, which means that they are all proficient in war preparations over Taiwan.

¹⁰⁵ This restriction comes from the "Law for Active-duty Officers," publicized in December 2000.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with a PLA officer, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Soldier's Oath (军人誓词).

¹⁰⁸ PLA officers interviewed by the author explained their belief that the PLA should follow the trend of Western professional armies to stay out of civilian political struggles as much as possible.

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with multiple PLA officers, 2012-2015.

¹¹⁰ It is public knowledge that after the Wenchuan earthquake took place on May 12, 2008, Premier Wen Jiabao gave an order to the PLA by phone to open and rebuild a road to Wenchuan by midnight of May 13. However, the PLA resisted Wen's order, which enraged Wen. This senior PLA officer argued that the PLA commanding officer resisted Wen's order because without special equipment, the military simply could not fulfill the order and if the military takes the order but fails in completing the task, the commanding officers and many down the chain would have to be held responsible for this failure. Other PLA officers interviewed unanimously endorsed the above opinion. One PLA officer said that many in the PLA were furious with Wen, because they believe Wen smeared the military by deliberately leaking this story without giving the military a fair chance to defend its actions. Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹¹¹ According to multiple PLA officers interviewed by the author, Premier Wen gave an order that "showed he has no idea how the military operates," which was "impossible to enforce before the military grasped more information." The commanding officer, allegedly General Li Shiming, Commander of the Chengdu Military Region, contravened Wen's order for two reasons: Premier Wen is not part of the military's command and control structure, and is therefore not authorized to give orders; and second, once the order is accepted, the commanding officer has to enforce it successfully and failure to achieve the goal within the time limit, dictated by Wen's order, would lead to the disciplining and punishment of this officer. The author has not interviewed civilians on this subject.

¹¹² A professional military would not topple the civilian leadership to obtain its ideal defense budget. That means that a professional military has to work within a political mechanism in which it has to lobby for a larger budget and greater resources. A professional military would want to make army-building a central mission for itself, and therefore would try to obtain the largest defense budget it can lobby for.

¹¹³ Before 1999, a huge portion of the PLA's budget went directly to the defense industry, as COSTIND dictated the PLA's armament procurement.

¹¹⁴ Many PLA officers interviewed by the author disagreed that the budgetary motive was a main driver that shaped the PLA's policy positions or its behavior because they argued, in the words of one senior officer, "the PLA would only act to protect China's national interest." The author believes the link between budgetary incentives and the PLA's war propensity (especially a justifiable, limited armed conflict) does exist, though it is heavily constrained by the process of decision-making within the PLA, the top leader's role, and the bureaucratic bargaining process.

¹¹⁵ Xi Zhigang, "Xi Jinping Rectifies the Military," *China News Weekly*, November 22, 2013, available at: <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2013/11-22/5536125.shtml>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Interview with a retired PLA officer who is currently a historian, Beijing, summer of 2014.

¹¹⁸ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2014.

¹¹⁹ Interview with a retired PLA officer in Shanghai, summer of 2011; interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2014.

¹²⁰ If the PLA is transformed into a state army, thus subject to the civilian government's control, the military would also be subject to the State Council's oversight, just as the State Council oversees the MFA. By keeping the PLA exclusively under the command of the Party, the military is kept in a separate system, and therefore does not have to listen to the government.

¹²¹ PLA officers are divided into commanders, staff, logistics officers, and political officers. It is fairly common for military officers to turn into political officers. The rotation between military commanders and staff positions is not only completely open, but is also a required experience for officers, as a staff position is regarded as useful for the position of commander and vice versa.

¹²² Michael D. Swaine pointed out, "to many (especially younger) officers, the influence exerted by commissars over personnel decisions is at best highly inappropriate and at worst extremely corrupting to the creation of a modern, professional military establishment." Swaine also mentioned, "some officers have argued for a wholesale downgrading of the political commissar system." See Swaine et al., *China: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy*, available at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR604, p. 28. The author's interviews with three senior PLA officers in July 2014, which occurred after Xu Caihou was put under house arrest, indicated that among professionally-oriented PLA professors there was unanimous agreement for abolishing the political commissar system.

¹²³ Article 52, "PLA Political Work Regulation."

¹²⁴ See You Ji, "Sorting Out the Myths About Political Commissars," in Nan Li (ed.), *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: The Transformation of the People's Liberation Army*, (New York: Routledge, 2006). The author wants to express thanks to You Ji for his generosity in sharing his writings and insights on the subject of the PLA's political commissar system and the military's role in China's foreign and security policy-making process.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ General Lü Zhengcao, former Vice Commander of the Northeast Military Zone, documented in his memoirs the catastrophic battle of Xue Cun and the CMC's resulting revision in September 1942 of the regulation to place final decision-making power in the Political Commissar's hands. Lü wrote, "The battle of Xue Cun taught us a painful lesson. On September 1, 1942, the CMC made a decision based on this lesson: revising the regulation that allowed Political Commissar to have the authority for final decision-making and placing the ultimate decision-making power of combat operations unanimously to military commanders." See Lü Zhengcao, *Lü Zhengcao's Memoir* (Beijing: PLA Press, 1988).

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ A group of senior PLA officers, including General Xiao Ke, Director of the PLA General Training Department, Xiao Hua, Deputy Director of the GPD, and Xiao Xiangrong, Director of the General Office of the CMC, supported Marshal Peng's call to abolish the dual-head responsibility system and make military commanders the supreme leader of their units, starting from the division and battalion level and then moving towards the regiment level and above. See Wang Yan, *Peng Dehuai's Chronology* (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 1998), pp. 545-6; Shen Zhihua and Li Danhui, *Memory of Peng Dehuai's Military Staff – Witnessing Sino-Soviet Military Relations in the 1950s* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2009), pp.

187-8; Fan Xiaochun, "Issues on Army-building Principles in Early Stage of New China," *junshi lishi yanjiu*, Issue 4 (2012), <http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsyj/gfs/gfzcs/201303/P020130319578919460077.pdf>.

¹³⁰ Marshal Luo Ronghuan, Director of the GPD and Political Commissar in Lin Biao's army, expressed his criticism to Peng Dehuai. Luo had a troubled relationship with Lin Biao when Luo was Political Commissar and Lin Biao was the overpowering Military Commander during the civil war. Their feud extended into the 1960s. Luo's role in resisting the abolishment of the dual-head responsibility system was documented in an article by *People's Daily*. See PLA General Politics Department Theory Team, "Comrade Luo Ronghuan, GPD's Good Director," *People's Daily*, August 3, 1978. However, this episode was curiously neither included in Luo Ronghuan's *Chronology* nor his biography. See *Luo Ronghuan's Chronology* (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 2002) and *Luo Ronghuan's Biography* (Beijing: dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2006).

¹³¹ In the PLA, the Party Committee at the division level can only appoint or remove officers at the battalion level, and recommends superior candidates to officers at the deputy regiment level. For promotions of officers at the regiment level, military regions play a crucial role. Therefore, the Party Committee plays a far less important role in officer promotion at this level. The Party Committee could only recommend officers at the same level to its superior, a process in which both military commanders and political commissars could weigh in with roughly same powers. For other important agendas that are brought to discussion at the Party Committee, the balance is delicate, since military officers slightly outnumber political officers, though the Party Secretary, if he is a political commissar, has only one vote (no veto power) and plays a more important role in agenda-setting and narration of issues. Interview with multiple officers, 2011-2014.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Interview with a PLA officer at PLA GSD, Beijing, summer of 2011.

¹³⁴ According to "Temporary Regulation on Appointment and Relieving of Positions of Cadres Above," issued in 1997, appointments or relieving of positions of officers above the level, have to be nominated by political officers and discussed by the Party Committee at the same level and decided based on the result of supervision and examination by the Party Committee and political officers. See Article 43 of Chapter 9.

¹³⁵ Interview with a retired PLA GSD officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

¹³⁶ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹³⁷ Interviews with a few PLA officers who specialize in education, training, and exercises in Hunan, Beijing, and Shanghai. Interviews were conducted from 2011 to 2013.

¹³⁸ Interview with a PLA officer, Hunan, summer of 2013.

¹³⁹ Interview with a military educator from the top military university who specializes in science and technology, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ "Regulations on the Appointment and Removal of the PLA Officers in Active Service" (Article 20), January 15, 2002, *PLA Daily*, available at: <http://gaige.rednet.cn/c/2008/08/21/1578364.htm>.

¹⁴¹ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁴² Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

¹⁴³ Ellis Joffe came to the same conclusion. See Ellis Joffe, "Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect," p. 42.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with a retired senior PLA general who had a close relationship with General Zhang Zhen, Beijing, summer of 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Xu Caihou, then Executive Director of the GPD, together with Guo Boxiong, then 1st ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff, were added onto the Party CMC in September 1999 and their nominations for the State CMC were approved in October 1999 by the NPC Standing Committee. See "Information: All Sessions of CMC of the CCPCC," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 25, 2004, available at: <http://news.sohu.com/20040925/n222235910.shtml>; The principle that the "Party commands the gun" is reflected in the routine practice of either having political commissars take on the position of one CMC Vice Chairman or having the Chief of GPD become the Secretary of the CCP Secretariat. When the CMC is transitioning, those members of the CMC whose are below 68 years old will stay on for the next team of the CMC, which is the the hidden rule of "67 (can still) advance and 68 (must retire) [*qishang baxia*]." This unofficially devised rule, widely accepted as an accurate description of senior officials' age limit, applies well to CMC leaders. For example, Cao Gangchuan, born in 1935, retired from the position of CMC Vice Chairman in 2007 (at the age of 72). In the case that all remaining CMC members are non-political officers,

the chief of GPD will become secretary of the CCP Secretariat, in order to reinforce the importance of political officers. That happened to the CMC team in 2002, when Guo Boxiong, a military commander, and Cao Gangchuan, a technical officer, became CMC Vice Chairmen. Xu Caihou, then Chief of GPD, entered the CCP Secretariat in 2002. See “Xu Caihou” and “Guo Boxiong,” “Database of Chinese Leading Cadres,” available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/gbzl/html/121000324.html>; “Cao Gangchuan’s C.V.,” *Xinhua News Agency*, January 21, 2002, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-01/21/content_246248.htm.

¹⁴⁶ “Junzhong de fanli (军种的藩篱),” meaning “separateness and barrier among services,” is a concept slightly different than inter-service rivalry. Inter-service rivalry in the PLA can be traced back to as early as the 1960s, when Zhang Aiping, then Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of the PLA’s strategic planning, merged the troops on Air Defense with the Air Force. Yang Chengwu, who disagreed with Zhang at the time, was said to have almost gotten into a physical fight with Zhang.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with a senior PLA active-duty officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Min Zhenfan and Wang Baocun (eds.), *Constructing Organizational System of Informationized Military* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2004), p. 308.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with a senior PLA officer, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁵¹ Such as Ma Xiaotian, who became Commander of the PLAAF after serving as Deputy Chief of General Staff.

¹⁵² Lin Biao’s downfall also brought a large number of senior naval and air force officers down, including Wu Faxian, then Commander of the Navy, and Li Zuopeng, then Political Commissar of the Air Force.

¹⁵³ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing’s Memoir*, p. 533.

¹⁵⁴ You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1999), p. 28.

¹⁵⁵ Additionally, these trends have led to the rise of the Navy and Air Force both in budget allocation and in the allocation of military leadership. Commanders of the Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery have automatically become members of the CMC since 2004. The allocation of China’s defense budget has been kept a state secret. Chas Freeman pointed out that the reason for this secrecy is more due to China’s own domestic/military politics, rather than an attempt to conceal it from the outside world. Therefore, the argument cannot be supported by specific figures. James Kraska has estimated that the PLAN receives 33 percent of the overall defense budget. The author believes that two approaches could be used to have a reasonable evaluation about the allocation of China’s defense budget. First, interviews with various military and civilian experts in China unanimously indicated that in recent years there has been an increase in the PLAN’s and PLAAF’s budget. Put more delicately, Li Jie, a PLAN expert, said, “the increase (of the budget of the PLAN and PLAAF) may not take an absolute form. It is likely that the share of these two services is kept unchanged, while the budget for others (Army) is reduced. The overall result could be regarded as the relative increase of the budget for the Navy and Air Force.” See “China Will Increase Budget for the Navy and Air Force,” *nan fang du shi bao*, March 5, 2012, available at: <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2012-03-05/0832684291.html>. Also, see Yang Qiong, “Chen Zhou: Defense Budget Increase Appropriate and Reasonable; China’s Security Interest Requires More Budget Input for Navy and Air Force,” *China Radio International*, March 6, 2014. The author’s interviews also indicated a needs-based approach to China’s defense budget allocation, in which a percentage of the defense budget is fixed in terms of general allocation but can vary from year to year depending on China’s security threats, especially contingencies in the past year. The Army, accounting for 60 percent of the PLA’s 2.3 million personnel, received at least 50-60 percent of the budget in the 1990s. In the 2000s, the speed with which the PLAN’s budget has increased is faster than that of the PLAAF over the past 15 years.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with an active-duty army officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, July of 2014. Also, the PLA’s strategic guidelines, renewed in 1993, listed the Sino-Indian border dispute as a strategic focus, along with the Taiwan problem and the South and East China Seas.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Jiang Zemin, “Review and Summary of the CMC Work in 10 Years,” November 24, 1999, included in *Jiang Zemin’s Selected Works: Volume II* (Beijing: People’s Press, 2006), available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/180138/10819166.html#>.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with a retired PLA officer who spent part of his career stationed in Southwest China, Beijing, July 2014.

¹⁶¹ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁶² Interview with a PLA Navy officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁶³ Bureaus under the GSD Operations Department include the Burueaus of Warfighting Planning (*zuozhan jihua ju*), War Environment (*zhanzheng huanjing ju*), Joint War-fighting Command (*lianhe zuozhan zhihui ju*), Warfighting Organization and Operation (*zuozhan zuzhi yunchou ju*), Special Ops (*tezhong zuozhan ju*), Strategic Aims (*zhanlve mubiao ju*), Military Preparation and Building (*zhanbei jianshe ju*), Military Exercise Administration (*yanxi guanli ju*), along with the Meteorological and Hydrological bureau (*qixiang shuiwen ju*), and bureaus in air traffic control (*kongguan*), survey (*cehui*), border control (*bianfang ju*), air force fighting (*kongjun zuozhan ju*), navy war fighting (*haijun zuozhan ju*), and the Political Department (*zhengzhibu*). Some of the above bureaus may be merged together, such as the War Environment Bureau with the meteorological and hydrological bureau. GSD Operations Department also houses the National Command and Control Center (*guoji zhihui kongzhi zhongxin*), which is China's central nerve system of command and control in times of war and grave contingency. This discussion is based on several blogs and websites devoted to military affairs, cross-referenced with each other and the author's interviews. See <http://blog.people.com.cn/article/9/1363938905994.html>.

¹⁶⁴ One would think that communications between the military intelligence and the Operations Department, and the CMC, the ultimate military leadership, are clear, linear and smooth. However, confusion and "fog of war" could emerge, as evidenced during the evening of June 4th, 1989. According to one interviewee who was a senior military officer who accompanied Liu Huaqing and Hong Xuezhai, two deputy secretary-generals of the CMC, there was great confusion in the CMC leadership about what was happening once the Operations Department started to enforce the order. "Liu and Hong heard intense shootings but didn't have any idea what was going on. The two generals insisted on peeking through the gates of the CMC at Sanzuomen and later went onto the roof themselves in hopes of seeing what was happening inside Beijing. They were convinced by their staff not to do so because of the danger of flying bullets outside. The operations of the PLA soldiers that night were directly supervised by the Operation Division of GSD, and once entering the operational state, were beyond the CMC's control," said this interviewee. Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012 and 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁶⁷ Luo Ruiqing, then Chief of General Staff, was a particularly strong character (强势人物) and no one could win a turf battle with him. For instance, GSD, GPD, and COSTIND used to each occupy one building in the same compound. With a GSD identification card, one could freely enter the other two buildings, while the GPD and COSTIND officers were not given this privilege. Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Fu Quanyou in 1992, as well as Chen Bingde and Li Jinai in 2002, took over the positions of chief of GSD and GPD after serving as chiefs of GLD and GAD.

¹⁶⁹ Huang Jianguo, a PLA officer, introduced the concept of "military soft power" in his article entitled, "Theory of Military Soft Power," which was published in the *PLA National Defense University Journal* in 2004. Hu Jintao commented about strengthening military soft power in a *Xinhua News Agency* report. See Cheng Xiaoyong, "Study of Military Soft Power And Its Application," *she hui ke xue*, Issue 10 (2012).

¹⁷⁰ Zhao Zhigang, Zhang Pengfei and Liu Feifei, "Analyzing the Leap of Chinese Military's Foreign Propaganda," February 7, 2014, available at: <http://www.zijin.net/blog/user1/189/archives/2014/20855.shtml>.

¹⁷¹ Interview with a retired PLA Navy officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁷² Interviews with multiple PLA officers showed that they all viewed Luo Yuan and Zhang Shaozhong as "un-professional" and opportunists who profited individually by taking ultra-nationalist positions on issues of national security.

¹⁷³ Interview with a PLA officer at Academy of Military Sciences, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with a PLA Navy officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with a PLA officer, Guangdong, January 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Scattered media reports indicate that members include people such as Liu Jixian, former Vice President of the Academy of Military Sciences; Yi Zheng, a senior expert with AMS in battle tactics; Zhang Shiping, a senior expert on doctrines and war-fighting with AMS; Wang Xiaoxuan, director of the PLA Institute for

Naval Studies; Meng Xiangqing, a strategist with PLA NDU; Liu Nanjie, an expert with the expertise in telecommunications and cyber strategy, who works on China's cyber strategy planning;

¹⁷⁷ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Media reports indicate that the opening ceremony for SPD's establishment was held in November 2011. Based on the author's interview with an officer who worked for SPD, however, the department was established in 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with a PLA officer at AMS, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with a PLA officer who worked in GSD's SPD, Beijing, 2012.

¹⁸¹ Interview with a PLA junior officer who worked in the GSD's Foreign Affairs Office, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁸² Interview with a PLA officer who used to work for SPD, 2013.

¹⁸³ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

¹⁸⁴ When the FAO has fundamental differences of opinion with functional departments in the PLA, it is most likely that the decision is put off till circumstances change or one side changes its thinking. In most cases, when the FAO disagrees with functional departments, it makes mutual compromises or packages together (*dabao*) each department's "most-wanted" items in the final product that goes to the CMC. Therefore, when it is approved by the CMC, every side gets what it wants most. It is rarely effective if FAO forces down certain decisions, while aware of functional departments' opposition, as even with the CMC's approval functional departments will resist and sabotage the actual implementation of the decision they disagreed with in the first place.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with a PLA officer who worked in the GSD's FAO, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁸⁶ This impression was based on conversations with several interviewees, both from the MFA and a few military officers invited to these MFA meetings.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, October 2012.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with a junior PLA NDU officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with various officers who worked under Ma Xiaotian, 2012-2015.

¹⁹⁰ This impression is based on the author's interviews with officers who worked under General Ma Xiaotian.

¹⁹¹ Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012; Michael D. Swaine, based on his interviews and analysis, concludes that it is unlikely that the PLA informs the CMC chairman prior to specific military actions, such as individual weapons tests and exercises. See Michael D. Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior Part Three.

¹⁹² Eric Hagt, James Mulvenon, Michael D. Swaine and others pointed to the most likely scenario: the 2007 ASAT test was a deliberate act that Hu Jintao was aware of, but the MFA was kept in the dark. See Eric Hagt, "China's ASAT Test: Strategic Response," *China Security Journal*, 3 (1) (Winter 2007) and James Mulvenon, "Rogue Warriors? A Puzzled Look at the ASAT Test," *China Leadership Monitor*, (20) (Winter 2007), available at: <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm20jm.pdf>.

¹⁹³ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011; Interview with an expert on arms control who is affiliated with MFA, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁹⁴ Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), pp. 526-9.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Jeffrey Bader, *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012).

¹⁹⁷ Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, pp. 526-9.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

²⁰⁰ Interview with an official from the MFA's Department of Asian Affairs, Beijing, January 2013.

²⁰¹ Interview with a retired PLA rear admiral, Seoul, South Korea, February 2013.

²⁰² Michael D. Swaine concluded that the CMC chairman will "almost certainly" not be told beforehand about military patrols, training exercises beyond China's borders, or the interception of foreign surveillance vessels. See Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior Part Three."

²⁰³ This is termed "operations of blockade and control," which generally means sealing the border, raising alertness, and sometimes reinforcing border troops, and increasing the frequency of border patrols to restrict the traffic across the border.

²⁰⁴ Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, vol. 2 (Beijing: jiefangjun chubanshe, 2011), pp. 338-442.

²⁰⁵ Carl Thayer, "USS Cowpens Incident Reveals Strategic Mistrust Between U.S. and China," *The Diplomat*, December 17, 2013, available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/uss-cowpens-incident-reveals-strategic-mistrust-between-u-s-and-china/>.

²⁰⁶ Bonnie S. Glaser, "People's Republic of China Maritime Disputes," testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces and the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Asia Pacific, January 14, 2014, available at: http://csis.org/files/attachments/ts140114_glaser.pdf.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Maj. Gen. Zhu Chenghu, Washington D.C., spring of 2014.

²⁰⁸ Rear Admiral Chen Weiwen and Li Shuwen, former Vice Commander of the South China Sea Fleet, provided this explanation in separate interviews. See Han Yong, "Past Events about Liu Huaqing"; "Interview with Ever Victorious Rear Admiral Chen Weiwen, Commander of Six Clashes on Seas with Vietnam over Spratlys: China Must Develop Aircraft Carriers."

²⁰⁹ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

²¹⁰ Interview with four civilian experts who specialize in China's maritime security strategy, and one interview with a PLAN officer, Beijing, Guangzhou and Haikou, 2012-2013.

²¹¹ Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

²¹² Wang Wenhao and Li Yueyue, "Zhao Yu Requested Twice to Shoot down Enemy Plane," *qiye dangjian cankaobao*, Issue 467, March 28, 2011, available at: <http://www.djckb.com/spacetime/s1/2011/0329/1060.html>.

²¹³ Some career officers, especially those from the Shenyang Military Region, discussed contingency plans in case of the collapse of the North Korean government. In such a scenario, they would care a lot about securing North Korea's nuclear facilities and controlling access to the Sea of Japan, which will open up the PLA's direct maritime access on the northern side. However, it is a rather controversial idea, which would be dismissed by most strategists in the military as too risky and controversial.

Chapter Three: Party-Military Relationship as an Independent Variable: Dynamics

Introduction

Given China's Party-dominated political system, power in politics is still the main determinant of power over policies. Therefore, in examining the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making, it is crucial to look at the Party-military relationship, which decides the scope of the military's political autonomy in China's power structure. The Party-military relationship here is defined as the dynamic of relations between the Party and the PLA, as determined by the top Party leader's political reliance on the military, the top leader's effective control over the military, and the PLA's political participation in the Party.¹

In 1980, China installed a collective leadership system that the general secretary of the Party heads, which remains the structure for governing China.² Despite the collective nature of the Party leadership in general decision-making, the top leader of the Party officially maintains an exclusive relationship with the PLA, as explained below. That said, the Party's strength and coherence, or its weakness and fragmentation, do impact the top Party leader's relations with the PLA. The strength, unity and coherence of the Party leadership would help reduce the top leader's dependence on the PLA's support, while the Party's fragmentation would weaken the top leader's authority and makes him more dependent on the PLA's support. Therefore, the collective leadership of the Party plays a role mostly in the aspects of strengthening/weakening the top leader's political reliance on the PLA. A decision regarding extremely crucial policies with direct

implications on war and peace would have to go through the collective leadership for responsibility-sharing purposes, but such a process is a bargaining game between the top leader and others in the Party leadership. Therefore, when the PLA's influence on policies is examined through the framework of the Party-military relationship, it is critical to understand the PLA's relationship with the top leader of the Party.

The previous chapter explored what motivates the PLA to influence China's foreign and security policy-making and found that the PLA has evolved into a professional army with unique characteristics, which precluded it from sliding into a pattern of political interference as a praetorian military. However, the PLA is strongly motivated to impact contingencies that combine core interests/territorial disputes with military threats, as well as those that they see as having a military prerogative.

Chapters Three and Four examine how the Party-military relationship impacts the PLA's ability to influence policies. This chapter builds a theoretical framework for assessing the Party-military relationship and provides a historical overview of this relationship. The next chapter explores empirical case studies of this relationship in the post-Mao era. Although the military's political representation is a reflection of how important it is relative to the Party's overall goals, the PLA's political participation in the Party (explained in the Appendix to Chapter 3) has a more crucial impact on interactions between the PLA and the government. The PLA's political participation is the mechanism through which it generates influence within the framework of the Party-military relationship.

The PLA's influence over policies is a function of the Party-military relationship, as determined by the balance of the supply and demand of political support between the

top leadership and the military. The PLA's categorical influence over policies and the policy-making process is determined by the degree of the Party leader's *political reliance* on the military, and the leader's *effective control* over the military. In order for the top leader to grant the military influence, he must be assured that during times of need he can rely on the military's allegiance and political support. Political reliance – the top political leader's reliance on the military's support – determines whether the leader needs the military in the first place. If the Party leader does not need the military's support and can control the military, the military's influence in politics and policy-making will diminish. In other words, without the need to secure the military's support, the Party leader exerts more control over the military, and thus the military has less influence over policies.

On the other hand, without effective control over the military, the top leader would be hesitant to believe that he owns the military's support and thus could rely on such support during times of turmoil or crucial moments in intra-Party politics. Under this circumstance, whereby the top political leader relies on the military but does not control it, the top political leader would seek to minimize the PLA's influence in politics and policies. If the top leader both politically relies on and effectively controls the military, the military will become one of the leader's strong power bases, and therefore the leader will naturally grant trust and access to the military, thus allowing it to exert influence over policies. In other words, when the top leadership politically relies upon and needs support from the PLA, the Party leader's effective control over the military will translate into the military's direct influence in policies that the top Party leader personally oversees. The Party-military influence is in this sense mutual. The Party-

military relationship is dynamic and responsive to the movements of political events and the rise and fall of political power.

Effective control that the top political leader establishes over the military leadership, and the top leader's political reliance on the military, determine the parameters of the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making. The concept of effective control refers to the PLA leadership's subordination to the top political leadership's authority concerning military personnel promotions, employment of the military for non-combat missions, and major political decisions, including key national policies that concern the country's overall development and stability. Effective control concerns largely the military's political autonomy rather than military autonomy, except with regard to appointing the senior officer corps (though political autonomy may impact military autonomy).³ The establishment of effective control could be facilitated by the military's increased willingness to accept the top political leadership due to a variety of reasons, including convergence or similarity in identity, values, visions, or goals. Effective control is different than political control or Party control carried out through systematic political indoctrination or the political work system in order to maintain the military's ideological loyalty to the Party. Political or Party control could be used to build effective control over the military, but they are not the same. The development of effective control undermines the military's autonomy.

This chapter consists of two parts: first, a definition of two concepts (political reliance and effective control) and a theoretical explanation of the PLA's influence; and second, an assessment of the Party-military relationship by looking at the Mao period (1927-1976).

The result of the application of the reliance-control model can be summarized as follows:

Table 3.1: Application of the Reliance-Control Model

Reliance	Control	PLA Influence
Low	High	Low
High	Low	Low
High	High	High

Under the Party-military framework, when the top leader has low-level political reliance on the PLA, this would translate to the PLA having low-level influence. If, however, the top leader has a high-level of political reliance on the PLA, whether the top leader grants the PLA high-level influence depends on whether he can establish effective control over the PLA.

Dynamics of the Party-Military Relationship

Since China's reorientation in 1978 toward a policy of economic reform and opening up, several important qualitative changes in Party-military relations emerged and later crystalized in the mid-1990s. The "interlocking directorate" and the traditional, symbiotic Party-military linkage were broken as a result of the generational shift from revolutionary leaders to those without military experience.⁴ Post-Deng senior political leaders generally have no prior military experience (with Xi Jinping standing as the exception, as he served in the PLA as Defense Minister Geng Biao's secretary), and thus the PLA's allegiance does not come naturally. Also, economic reform allowed for the accelerated development of the PLA's separate corporate interest, a new budget

allocation system, and the PLA's continuous professionalization.⁵ Finally, while Party ideology has lost its appeal amongst the PLA's rank and file, the framework of the Party-military relationship still applies because the Party continues to dominate China's political system. Despite the fact that the Party's ideological appeal may be greatly diminished, the Party-designed power structure remains intact. The Party-military relationship since the mid-1990s is increasingly one in which both sides jockey for control and influence.

Some analysts equate the PLA's influence with the PLA's representation in China's formal power structure.⁶ Indeed, to understand any specific area of policy-making in China, one has to understand China's political power structure. Its uniqueness lies in the Party's preeminent status over the military, state, and society.⁷ In the almost four decades since China began to reform and modernize, the relationship between the Party and each subordinate unit in the system has changed drastically. One can even argue that the Party itself has fundamentally changed.⁸ However, since 1978 China's formal power structure has remained largely unchanged.

It is important to understand the formal political power structure embedded in the Party system, though this study shows that the PLA's political representation has a negligible impact on its influence over policies. For example, under Mao, the PLA's representation in the Party leadership was strongest, while its influence on foreign and security policy was probably weakest. A close examination of the PLA's political representation, in the Appendix to this chapter, highlights the PLA's importance in general, and these formal structures are an important factor in the PLA's relationship with other policy actors, but they are not venues for the PLA to exercise its influence under the

framework of Party-military relations. Therefore, this will instead be discussed in a later chapter focusing on the relationship between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system, since the PLA's political representation impacts its relationship with other bureaucracies.

This chapter analyzes history's impact in detail because history significantly shaped the outline of the current Party-military relationship and fundamentally determined the unique position of the military in China's political system. An understanding of the Party-military relationship and the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making lies primarily in the structural disconnect between the military and the government (State) due to historical Party-military arrangements. Without the nationalization of the military or subordination of the military to the State system, the military is organically separated from the government in foreign and security policy-making. Also, because of the PLA's history of acting as a caretaker, guarding the Party's victory and survival, and supplanting the Party as the supreme governor during times of national chaos, soldiers enjoy a place in the Party-dominated power structure that diplomats simply cannot match. However, this does not mean that the military wins every policy battle, and in fact during some points in history diplomats did outflank the military during policy debates.⁹ Nonetheless, without understanding the history of the Party-military relationship, one misses out on the origins of the intricate relationship that exists between the Party and the military in contemporary China.

Party-Military Relationship as an Independent Variable: Dynamics

This section examines how the Party-military relationship has impacted the PLA's influence over China's foreign and security policy-making process since 1978.¹⁰ During this period, Deng's era was the only time in which the top leader (Deng) was so strong that he did not rely on the PLA. Throughout almost the entire 1980s, Deng, with a singular focus on economic reform, had little need for the PLA to provide political support. The one exception to this was the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989. The PLA had minimal influence over foreign and security policies during Deng's era.¹¹ Deng's successors have generally politically relied on the military. Therefore, the defining measure for the degree to which the military influences policies is the extent to which the top leader establishes effective control over the military. In the post-Deng era, the more control the top leader exerts over the PLA, the more confident he is in wielding the military's influence when necessary to advance his political goals, the more trusting he is in the military, the more access the PLA gains to the top leader, and the more influence the PLA has in China's overall policy-making process.

The policies that the top Party leader directly oversees are the same issues that the PLA influences through the Party-military construct, namely those that cannot be settled at the level of the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) and must instead go to the top leader for his guidance. These issues are those that have bearing on China's core national interests and overall international well-being, namely Sino-U.S. relations and cross-Strait (Taiwan) relations, regional security issues that impact great power relations (South and East China Seas, North Korea), contingencies that have direct bearing on the imminent threat of wars (such as the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999), and major foreign policy issues where interagency (including the military)

differences exist and no consensus can be reached (such as the Sino-Philippine Scarborough Shoal standoff in 2012). Even with the Party leader's intervention, foreign and security policies issued by the leader are mostly guidelines rather than detailed policies.¹²

Top Leader's Political Reliance on the PLA

Unlike Western democratic systems, in which a military has to keep political neutrality to be considered professional, in the Chinese system, officially, the military remains part of the Party and therefore its political participation is regarded as “an expression of Party loyalty, not a violation of military professionalism.”¹³ Therefore, the Party at some points legitimized and even required the PLA's political participation, and in some extreme cases the PLA's proactive intervention. In some instances, the PLA's political intervention when implemented strayed out of the agreed upon and desired course the top leader set, as demonstrated by the PLA's persistent frictions with radicals in the 1960s and early 1970s and its officers' opposition to carrying out the Tiananmen crackdown. Yet such dissent was localized within small groups and limited in scale and degree, as compared to the overall course of action. The PLA's past interventions in Chinese politics did not indicate a particular interest within the military to alter China's political landscape, but rather reflected its compliance with political leaders' orders. The PLA has internalized the norm of subordination to the Party to such a degree that the military's compliance with the Party's wishes is almost assumed. However, when the Party leader disagrees with the military's policy positions the military is not immune from suffering similar political consequences as its civilian counterpart (MFA).

For example, even with the extreme case of the Gang of Four's arrest in 1976, when it was a life-and-death struggle between radicals and moderates, one camp in the PLA's senior echelon was advocating using a military coup (*bingjian*) to take down the Gang of Four and thereby force Hua Guofeng's (Mao's designated civilian successor) hand.¹⁴ The PLA leaders independently ruled out this idea, on the grounds that such actions "ran against the nature of the PLA."¹⁵ The PLA leadership under Marshal Ye Jianying instead pursued and obtained Hua's support, which legitimized the arrest. On the other hand, both civilian officials and military officers widely recognize that the PLA is an instrument of power "that is supposed to neither think nor act with political autonomy," precisely because "compared with the other forms or sources of power, military power weighs the heaviest."¹⁶

The PLA's allegiance, if obtainable, is one of the most formidable pieces of support for any Chinese leader in domestic politics. However, some leaders need such support more than others. Variables that affect the degree to which a leader needs the military's backing include the stability, multiplicity, and authoritativeness of leaders' own power bases, fragmentation of the political opposition, and crisis level (intense inter-Party rivalries and rifts that may split the Party, leadership succession, prosecution of major political leaders, and events that threaten the country's overall political stability).

Deng Xiaoping certainly gained the officer corps' nearly full and unconditional personal allegiance. First, the Party-military relationship was lopsided, with the military badly needing Deng's leadership and authority to launch systematic reforms to reboot the military after decades of chaos. Deng resurrected the political careers of a large group of veteran cadres and cleared the names of those wrongly purged during Mao's political

campaigns. These officials, in return, became part of Deng's power base through the early 1980s. A younger generation of leading experts in education, science and technology, and economics were at the core of Deng's power base throughout the 1980s. Therefore, Deng had little need to rely on the military politically in the 1980s, with the exception of the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. Second, the military's backing of Deng would change neither China's domestic power structure nor the rules that governed political bargaining during most of the 1980s. For example, despite the opposition of Chen Yun's camp to Deng's policies of economic reform and political liberalization, it was unimaginable that Deng would take down Chen with military force, even though Deng had the PLA's full allegiance. This is because there were other arbiters in the political system, such as the Party elders, and the military would not tip the balance of power either between Deng and Chen or between Deng and his deposed successors (Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang).¹⁷ Third, none of the crises except the Tiananmen Incident were grave enough to undermine the overall political stability of the Party and the nation.

Even during the course of one leader's rule, the importance of the military's backing varied depending on the circumstances. For example, between 1989 and 1992 Deng needed the military's backing much more than he needed it from 1980-87. As both Yan Jiaqi and Ruan Ming, political insiders during the 1980s, have concluded, Deng's political power was repeatedly weakened from 1987-89 in favor of the conservative camp led by Chen Yun due to the collapse of the Deng-Hu-Zhao mechanism,¹⁸ after he denounced Hu in 1987 and ordered the Tiananmen massacre in 1989.¹⁹

As political power inevitably decentralized after strongmen faded away, the top leaders in the post-Deng era face more political constraints and challenges as the Party

continuously and inevitably fragments as it faces increasingly powerful interest groups, opposing political factions within and outside of the Party, strong bureaucracies with self-interested agendas, and an increasingly empowered and vocal society. Meanwhile, the political system and leadership succession have become more institutionalized, predictable, and therefore stable. The occasions in which the top leadership needs the PLA's political participation and support are rare and close to nonexistent during "normal" times, when there is not severe fragmentation within the Party and/or debilitating nationwide civil unrest. However, the military's backing, or absence of support for the opposing political faction during serious crises or grave political turbulence, may tip the balance of power. Therefore, during the post-Deng era the military's support has become even more crucial to the top leadership and is a potential game-changer. In other words, the PLA, as security provider-of-last-resort, is indispensable to the Party and the top leader in particular. This, in turn, also changes how the Party interacts with the military, which makes the top leader's political reliance on the military for support in the post-Deng era such a critical variable. As the PLA's allegiance and support becomes the "nuclear option" for the top leader and the Party, lacking such support could be a fatal political vulnerability for the Party's top leader. At the same time, the military needs access to the leadership for resources. In the Chinese political system, the attention of and access to the top leader are the hard currency of political capital, which equals resources.

Effective Control

Effective control refers to the senior military leadership's subordination to the top political leader's authority over primarily major political decisions (political compliance/autonomy) concerning personnel promotions, employment of the military for non-combat missions, and important non-military political decisions such as the arrest of Bo Xilai and Zhou Yongkang.²⁰ In comparison, the PLA's military autonomy concerns professional decisions such as budget allocation, systematic bureaucratic reforms, strategies and missions, and army building and training, all of which are not the targets of effective control. The political leader is primarily concerned with the military leadership's political compliance. Effective control is a measure of relative power between the political and military leaders. Effective control, as employed here, is different from Party control or political control through ideological indoctrination, which is an institutional concept, though the two concepts sometimes overlap.

The military leadership here refers to those senior military officers who are the primary decision-makers and first-tier implementers in military affairs, with administrative rank no lower than that of Military Region Deputy (*fu da junqu jibie*). This group of officers matters most in determining the top political leader's effective control over the military, since each officer who attains such a position has accumulated substantial expertise and a power base within the military. Additionally, officers at the level of Military Region Deputy always become alternate members of the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC), the official collective leadership of the Party, and those with the rank of Military Region Principal always become full members of the CCPCC.²¹ These officers are "political appointees" in the military, meaning that their promotion to such positions entails political considerations and requires the support of some patron(s) in the

military or the Party. It also means that their positions start to have political implications for the collective Party leadership.

The more effective control the top leader exerts over the PLA, the more confident the leader is in wielding the military's influence when necessary to advance his political goals, the more trusting he is in the military, the more access the PLA gains to him, and the more influence the PLA has in China's policy-making process. Conversely, the less effective control the top leader exerts over the PLA, the more distrustful he is of the military, the more distanced the relationship between the PLA and him is, the less access he is willing to give, and the less heard the military's opinions become.

The top political leaders in the post-Deng era do not have the same deep and organic bonds with the military that Mao or Deng had. As a result, these leaders face far more difficulties in establishing authority and effective control over the PLA. This tug of war for control and influence therefore comes as leaders seek to control soldiers in order to serve their political needs, while soldiers seek influence and resources by obtaining greater attention from leaders.

Importance of Effective Control

Among all the tools of power and control the top leader possesses, effective control over the military is the most important and necessary.²² Without firm control over the military, a top leader risks becoming ineffective, allowing instability to take root, and even countenancing the possible replacement of his rule. Examples of this can be found in the fates of Liu Shaoqi in 1968, Hua Guofeng in 1981, Hu Yaobang in 1987, and Zhao Ziyang in 1989. Jiang faced a similar risk in 1991-92 because he had major policy

disagreements with Deng, but saved himself politically after abandoning the conservative policies associated with Chen Yun and Li Peng and aligning with the more open and liberal economic policies that Deng supported.

Although the military was never directly used to unseat these political leaders, all of the above Chinese leaders lacked effective control over the military during their downfall. In Jiang's case, he faced a genuine risk of being purged. Although the system of collective political leadership has been further consolidated in the post-Deng era, and with regards to the process of political succession has been further institutionalized, control over the military is indispensable for any top leader who seeks ultimate political authority in China.²³ This still holds true and will remain so for the foreseeable future, unless China's political system is fundamentally altered by introducing either full democracy or meaningful intra-Party competition, and turning the PLA into a State army.

In state affairs, the top leader is only the first among equals, while in military affairs he is, or is at least supposed to be, peerless. This distinction is less important during times of political stability, unity, and continuity. However, during serious political disagreements within the Party or in times of succession, the importance of consolidating political support and maintaining stability through the firm control of the military becomes critically important. A full-scale military coup is highly unlikely in today's China, given the PLA officer corps' level of professionalization. The military is even highly unlikely to contemplate the use of force domestically unless a political upheaval endangers the stability and unity of society as a whole.²⁴ However, the military leadership's public support and endorsement of the top leader would greatly help to consolidate the top leader's political position during a delicate moment; meanwhile, the

revelation of fracture and even conflict between the military and the civilian government inevitably weakens the top leader's position. As a result, the top leader in China will always seek to strengthen and ideally monopolize his control over the military. Even with the nominal and actual development of collective leadership in the post-Deng era, the CMC Chairman's monopolistic control over the military is still justified as a tacit golden rule of Chinese politics. The decisions over critical security policies involving the military require the Politburo Standing Committee's (PBSC) collective endorsement, but running day-to-day military affairs is still the exclusive realm of the CMC Chairman, and such policies are unaccountable to the PBSC's other members.

Division of Military and State Affairs

The long-existing division of military and state affairs makes it possible for the top leader to exert exclusive control over the military. The Party leader's self-interested calculation, rather than the interest of the Party at large, has kept military affairs as the top Party leader's exclusive domain. Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, who were both professional soldiers, voiced their support for transforming the PLA into a State army.²⁵ However, there was collusion and a tacit understanding within the Party that the PLA should remain a Party army, even though the top Party leader clearly had a bigger stake in maintaining the status quo.

The separation of the military and state realms has been a traditional political practice since Mao's time, under the formula of "the Politburo's realm is state affairs and the CMC's is military affairs."²⁶ Mao believed "everything comes from gun barrels,"²⁷ and therefore he maintained strict control over building the army and deploying troops,

even when his designated successor, Lin Biao, was overseeing the PLA's day-to-day operations. Deng Xiaoping maintained this division despite periodic and short-lived internal debates that Zhao Ziyang encouraged and backed that recommended separating the Party from military affairs. Deng was cautious about transferring control of military power to his designated successors, Hu Yaobang or Zhao Ziyang, and it was taboo for either of them to step too far into the military realm before Deng made up his mind.²⁸

It has been a sacred principle that the Party commands the gun and the PLA must have absolute loyalty to the Party, and political leaders since Deng have followed this rule. Military affairs are kept highly separate from state affairs and even Party affairs, as evidenced by the fact that in the chain of command the PLA only answers to one civilian, the CMC Chairman.²⁹ The PLA has not been subject to any external scrutiny such as the National People's Congress (NPC) (the legislative body for the State), or the National Congress of the CCP (the legislative body for the Party). According to Article 94 of the 1982 Constitution, the CMC Chairman "answers to" the NPC and its Standing Committee, but is not required to "report its work" to them, a requirement which the State Council – China's central government – is subject to. The PLA leadership is neither required by the Constitution to report its work progress to the NPC, nor to address inquiries from the NPC.

By having independent auditing, disciplining (anti-corruption), and judicial systems, the PLA has enjoyed a high level of autonomy. The military has its own farmland, issues its own vehicle license plates and driver's licenses, and is in most respects not subject to civilian jurisdiction such as highway taxes, traffic fines, or criminal investigations. In this sense, "there are always two Chinas, a military China and

a non-military China,” with the CMC Chairman acting as the highest bridge.³⁰ As a result, the traditional separation of military and state affairs has made it possible for the top political leader to exert exclusive control over the military.

In the post-Deng era, the top leader no longer possesses near absolute authority in domestic politics, although Xi Jinping has emerged as a possible exception. Instead, collective political leadership, as exemplified by the PBSC, has taken hold. Leadership succession has become more institutionalized and predictable. Despite this trend, the top political leader’s relationship with the top layer of the military leadership, including the CMC vice chairmen and members selected from the officer corps, remains highly personalized and exclusive, in the sense that the top political leader rejects interference from any other non-military political leader.³¹

Obstacles to Effective Control and the Issue of Political Interference

Holding the CMC Chairmanship – the supreme military commander – is crucial to maintaining the authority to command the military. Because of the military’s unique nature in that it follows explicit orders through a fixed command-and-control procedure, official authority is even more important within the military’s structure. Even for paramount leaders like Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, holding the formal title of CMC Chairman was still important, despite the fact that both of them had the PLA officers’ almost absolute personal loyalty.

The political battle for control over the military starts with leaders vying for the official title of Chairman of the CMC. For most of the PRC’s history, the CMC Chairman has also been the top Party and State leader. However, this is not always the case. For

example, Deng Xiaoping remained CMC Chairman from 1981 to 1989, even though Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang were consecutively general secretaries of the CCPCC or the top Party leaders, while Li Xiannian and then Yang Shangkun served as President of the State. Deng gave up all of his political positions in 1987 except the CMC Chairmanship, which he transferred to Jiang Zemin two years later. Jiang manipulated this practice, pointing to this precedent in order to justify delaying the transfer of the CMC Chairmanship to Hu Jintao, the new General Secretary of the Party, from 2002 to 2004.³²

By tradition, the CMC chairman should concurrently be the Party's top leader, the CCPCC chairman (otherwise known as the CCPCC general secretary). However, the authority, status, function, or composition of the CMC has never been clearly written in the nation's constitutions, nor in the CCP's constitution.³³ After Hua Guofeng resigned as CCPCC Chairman and CCP CMC Chairman in June 1981, these two top positions were intentionally divided.³⁴ Deng took over the CCP CMC Chairmanship, while Hu Yaobang became the CCPCC Chairman (renamed the "CCP general secretary" in 1982). The Party's constitution was then altered to accommodate Deng's wishes. The 1982 CCP Constitution stipulated that the CMC Chairman would be selected from among the CCP Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) members, in order to accommodate the fact that Deng was not officially the top leader of the Party.³⁵ The CCP constitution had to be revised again in 1987, which put Party membership as the only requirement for becoming CMC Chairman, in order to again accommodate Deng.³⁶ By November 1987, Deng no longer held any position on the CCP Politburo or its Standing Committee. The only position Deng held onto from 1987 to 1989 was the CCP CMC Chairmanship.³⁷

The official transfer of the CMC Chairmanship, however, does not guarantee the new chairman's effective control over the military, as evidenced by Hua Guofeng from 1978-81. Thus, the official title of CMC Chairman is a necessary but not sufficient condition to exercising power over the military. This problem has only worsened in the post-Deng era, as the CMC Chairman, who generally lacked a military background and therefore the default loyalty of the military, only slowly gained the PLA's allegiance after the transfer of formal power. For example, Jiang Zemin from 1989-93, and Hu Jintao arguably throughout his entire tenure, did not exert full control over the military. The example of Jiang during his transition to power is illustrative. In 1989, Deng appointed Admiral Liu Huaqing as CMC Vice Chairman, Yang Shangkun as President and CMC Vice Chairman, and Yang Baibing — Yang Shangkun's half brother — as General Secretary of the CMC.³⁸ Deng, at least formally, demanded that the CMC Vice Chairmen and General Secretary act as Jiang's de facto "aides."³⁹ Jiang, now CMC Chairman, assigned Liu Huaqing to be in charge of hosting CMC Regular Work Meetings and required that major issues be brought to discussion at the PBSC, where Jiang was in attendance.⁴⁰ However, Liu decided to first report to Yang Shangkun for instruction, and if the issue was important, he would then report to Jiang.⁴¹ The chain of command in the CMC from 1989-92 was clear: Yang Shangkun was still the CMC's real boss, despite the fact that he had the same (if not lower) position as Liu in the military, since both were CMC vice chairmen.⁴²

Top leaders in the post-Deng era have greater incentives to establish effective control over the PLA. If they cannot control the top soldiers – the CMC vice chairmen – they would then try to build direct links to the chief of general staff (CGS) and other

CMC members in order to build partial control. For example, Jiang won CGS Zhang Wannian's allegiance by manipulating the corruption charge against Zhang, while maintaining a thorny relationship with Admiral Liu Huaqing.⁴³ Whether the top leader can effectively control the PLA determines whether he can trust the military to serve his interests during times of need. Without effective control and therefore trust in the military, the top political leader would have more incentive to confine and shrink the role the military plays in China's political process. This happened, for example, when Jiang took over the cross-Strait back channel from the PLA in 1992, and when Hu Jintao excluded Xu Caihou from the Secretariat in 2002-03 through procedural blockades.

Why doesn't the military leadership just give its allegiance to the new supreme leader, if that means greater access to the top political leader and therefore greater influence over the policy-making process? Wouldn't it be rational for the military leadership to subordinate itself to the new top leader? Accepting a new political master could be obstructed by the PLA leadership's conviction that the leader is not fit to manage military affairs, due to the leader's lack of understanding or seniority. This was how the PLA viewed Hu Yaobang. In addition to the problem of acceptance on the PLA's side, one of the biggest obstacles to the new civilian CMC chairman assuming effective control is political interference from the previous chairman and even chairmen. Deng from 1989-94 and Jiang from 2002-12 both obstructed their successor's attempts to gain effective control.

There is a prevailing recognition among PLA officers that "the PLA listens only to the CMC chairman" and "others cannot interfere in military affairs."⁴⁴ The CMC follows the "Chairmen Responsibility System," which bestows upon the CMC chairman

the highest authority over military affairs. This rule still holds true when referring to the ultimate military command authority regarding deployments. However, such exclusivity of allegiance to the CMC chairman should be compared with the rest of the existing collective political leadership, namely the other members of the PBSC.

The previous CMC chairman's political interference is facilitated by his influence over the appointment of the CMC members who will serve the new chairman during his first term. Although the PLA is by and large a professional military and its professionalization has accelerated in recent decades, the very top layer of military leaders has always been composed of political appointees. The CMC chairman has the authority, at least nominally, to nominate the vice chairmen and the members of the CMC, which include the chiefs of all general departments and, since 2004, chiefs of three services (Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery). However, such authority is often realized only in his second five-year term, if at all. The pool of qualified candidates for military leadership positions presented to the new CMC chairman is generally highly restricted, because the process of selecting officers follows explicit, written rules, and there are few candidates who have the requisite qualifications for the highest-level leadership positions. The new CMC chairman, for his first term, almost certainly inherits a CMC constructed by his predecessor. Thus, the new CMC chairman is most likely surrounded by a team with allegiance to the previous CMC chairman. In Hu Jintao's case, this problem persisted into his second term.⁴⁵

To cultivate officers and bring them into the chairman's own inner circle could take years, because such an effort has to begin during the early stages of such officers' careers. This is due to a particularly pervasive culture among PLA officers known as

“loyalty to the king” (*zhongjun*). As one retired officer put it, “The thinking of *zhongjun* is a long-lasting tradition amongst PLA officers. Once they are promoted by someone, they regard themselves as ‘his man.’ Even if they don’t see it this way, others will still see them as such. This is the general rule, though of course the rule has exceptions.”⁴⁶ This line of thinking exists not only between military officers and political leaders, but also among military officers. “For example, Jiang tried to establish himself as the ‘core’ of the leadership, so he promoted a network of (PLA) officers, who in turn tried to establish themselves as the ‘little core’ of their universe, and so on and so forth from the top to the bottom,” explained a PLA officer.⁴⁷

There is a degree of “stickiness” in this network of loyalties and vested interests, which is difficult to break. The slate is hard to wipe clean, and individual officers are often stuck in a particular network. Therefore, the battle for control brought on by a change in leadership and even semi-political campaigns is inevitable for the new CMC chairman in the process of establishing control. That is also why the top leader can only slowly establish effective control over the military, even though it is critical to the overall success of his general political leadership. This also explains why each new CMC chairman will seek to replace as many officers as he can, in almost all key positions in the military.

Measuring Influence, Political Reliance and Effective Control

Influence is “causing decision makers to do something they probably would not have done otherwise.”⁴⁸ Generating influence is realized through two approaches: direct influence, by encapsulating and explicitly expressing the formal institutional opinion

directly to the decision-making bodies or the top leader; and relative power, by shaping the opinion environment in the public domain or through military intelligence, which frames the question and the basis of the official decision-making. Alternatively, the military can generate relative power by deliberately or unintentionally stalling a policy's implementation, or choosing the route of inaction by refusing to cooperate or consult with other policy actors, which results in a change of the facts on the ground and therefore the basis of decision-making.⁴⁹ The PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making can be assessed by observing the difference between what the PLA advocates prior to a policy decision and the policy outcome. In certain instances, direct evidence of PLA preferences may not be readily apparent, in which case one must examine the options that fit the PLA's interests.

As abstract as the concept of the Party-military relationship are the two components of this concept: the Party leader's *political reliance* on the military, and the leader's *effective control* over the military. The problem for academic research is how to measure these abstract, nonmaterial and non-quantifiable concepts. Among the two concepts, reliance is even more elusive and subjective than control.

There is no easy way to solve this measurement puzzle. When measuring political reliance, it is more manageable to examine the power landscape and rules of political bargaining in China's top-level intra-Party politics. Therefore, variables that affect the degree to which a leader needs the PLA's political support include: the stability, multiplicity, and authoritativeness of leaders' own power bases; the coherence or fragmentation of the political opposition within and outside the Party; and the crisis level or stakes (intense inter-Party rivalries and rifts that may split the Party, leadership

succession, prosecution of major political leaders, and events that threaten the country's overall national or political stability). These variables can be broken down into the following questions: How important is the PLA's political support to the political/policy positioning in intra-Party politics at the leadership level? In other words, will the PLA's political support tip the balance during the process of political bargaining? At the national level, is there a grave security threat that has made the use or threat of use of force necessary and imminent?

The level of effective control the top leader has over the PLA can be determined by looking at four aspects, namely his ability to: streamline the PLA; effectively advance systematic reform in the PLA; remove or demote officers whom he distrusts; and change key leadership positions, including the CMC members, commanders, and political commissars of the seven military regions, especially the Beijing Military Region.

The top leaders in the post-Deng era each faced a common political challenge: diversification of political power and intensified intra-Party competition have often made the top leader's authority less absolute and more vulnerable to interference by outside actors. In addition to factions deeply rooted in history, new interest groups with increasingly coherent agendas, which often command a large amount of wealth and resources, further complicate the positioning for power inside the Party. The increased institutionalization and stability of political succession after 1989 was undermined by anti-corruption campaigns, which were tools of distinct political agendas. China's economic modernization and social pluralization are also posing challenges to the Party's legitimacy. Therefore, the PLA plays the crucial and irreplaceable role of political

“stabilizer,” which makes top political leaders in the post-Deng era more reliant on the PLA.

If judged by the above criteria for measuring effective control, Jiang Zemin during his 15-year tenure as CMC Chairman gradually met each of these requirements for establishing effective control. Jiang reduced PLA personnel by 500,000 from 1997-99, and in 2003 announced a further reduction in personnel of 200,000. Additionally, Jiang implemented reforms in 1997-98 that forced the PLA to abandon its interests in the marketplace. Jiang also removed the Yang brothers in 1992 and blocked the majority of officers that the Yang brothers sought to promote. Finally, Jiang appointed Zhang Wannian as CMC Vice Chairman in 1995, in order to sideline Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen. In 1992, Gu Shanqing, who had a close relationship with Yu Yongbo and probably contributed to Xu Caihou’s rise, became Political Commissar of the Beijing Military Region, who was by association close to Jiang.⁵⁰

Compared to Jiang, Hu Jintao exerted much weaker control over the military. Hu never announced military personnel cuts. Hu tried to launch a military reform in 2006-07 to streamline the military’s organizational structure and shorten the command-and-control chain in order to better prepare the PLA for “information warfare” and enhance the “jointness” of services. This reform also called for replacing non-combat officers with the PLA’s civilian staff or civilian officers to improve the structure of the officer corps, better utilize the defense budget, and cut military personnel.⁵¹ However, the PLA leadership strongly resisted such a policy, and it was shelved following the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake.⁵² The military reform Hu initiated progressed slowly over the following years and apparently went awry. By 2012, it was completely distorted and

manipulated to add positions for unworthy officers and insert more political officers throughout the military system, contrary to what Hu's reform had intended.⁵³

Additionally, throughout his tenure Hu was unable to replace CMC Vice Chairmen Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, both of whom he inherited from Jiang. Finally, Hu was unable to promote his favored generals such as Zhang Qinsheng into the CMC. From 2002-12, Hu did not influence the promotion of most full generals, though he did build up control over promotion of commanders and political commissars of several military regions.⁵⁴

Most notably, Hu appointed General Fang Fenghui, an associate he trusted, as Commander of the Beijing Military Region in 2007.

In analyzing the Party-military relationship, the measures delineated above provide a general set of guidelines for evaluating its two most important component parts, namely political reliance and effective control. These broad guidelines allow one to discern the general trends of these variables, which are inherently difficult to measure or quantify.

Table 3.1: *Effective Control, Military Autonomy, and Influence Through the Lens of Party-Military Relationship*

	Deng Xiaoping	Jiang Zemin	Hu Jintao
Supervisor of Routine Military Affairs	Dominant Civilian; Supervisor and Subsidiary; Professional Soldier	Professional Soldier	Professional Soldier
Relationship with PLA	Symbiotic	Top leader had no military experience; military leadership from defiant to obedient	Top leader had no military experience; distanced relationship with military leadership
Need for Political Support	Low	High	High
Effective Control	High	Low to relatively high	Extremely low
Military Autonomy	Low	High to low	High
PLA's Influence	Low	Low to high	Low, but relatively higher than MFA

Reliance, Control, Access, and Influence

In the Party-military relationship, the top leadership's political reliance on the PLA determines the PLA's influence in politics as well as in the policy-making process. If the leadership does not need the military, it lacks the incentive to grant influence to soldiers. When such political reliance on the military exists, the top leadership will try to

establish effective control over the military. In other words, the top leadership's political reliance on the PLA allows for the PLA to bargain for more influence.

When previous and incumbent CMC chairmen vie for control and influence over the military, rivalries inevitably arise inside the military. Those who benefit from political favors tend to perpetuate the patronage system to cultivate their own supporters in the military, which raises the possibility of nepotism and corruption. With some officers fast-tracked for promotion because they have political or military patrons, there are inevitably others who are better qualified but are nonetheless passed over. Such officers thus resent the current leadership and are therefore natural supporters of the new CMC chairman. The previous CMC chairman's political interference, as well as fears of the incumbent CMC chairman, make the PLA officer corps' loyalty and allegiance more personalized. Whether the top political leader can effectively control the PLA has a crucial impact on his trust and confidence in the military, which in turn determines his proclivity to give access to the military. With effective control established, and therefore trust in the military to serve his interests, the top leader would be more accessible to the military and more likely to actively consult with it. Therefore, the top political leader's degree of effective control over the military is crucial to determining the PLA's overall access to the top leader and the extent of the PLA's influence in policy areas. Once effective control is established, the military becomes a strong power base for the leader and naturally gains trust, access, and influence. Conversely, when the top leader is unable to establish effective control, the military is treated as a force that can potentially threaten the political leader's power. In such instances, the political leader will try to shrink the military's influence as much as possible. While maintaining a distant relationship with

the top leader, in such circumstances the military leadership is most likely to respond by taking an indirect approach, primarily by attempting to mold public opinion, stalling the implementation of policies, and acting uncooperatively with other policy-making actors.

The battle for effective control over the military has to contend with the increasingly institutionalized nature of the military leadership and the trend of professionalization. The PLA has formulated a comprehensive set of merit-based rules and requirements, and has also established strict age limits, for officer promotion. Despite the corruption in the military revealed from 2011-15, the trend of professionalization generally accelerated in the 1990s. The practice of networked loyalties, especially prevalent during Jiang's era and manifested in senior officer promotions and the politicization of officer promotions, was widely abhorred by professional military officers. However, whether systematic checks and balances could be built in to reduce and prevent such a growth of networked loyalties is doubtful, given the importance of the top leader's control over the military to his political power and the continued separation of military and state affairs. Moreover, promotion of the top layer of military leadership (CMC members) will always be political. Top military leadership must certainly be able to demonstrate performance as a professional PLA officer, but this has to be complemented by proven political loyalty.

Understanding the Essence of the Party-military Relationship: History

History shapes the PLA's prestige and unique position in China's Party-dominated power structure, a structure that determines the organic segregation between the military and China's civilian foreign affairs system. Thus, understanding the history

of the Party-military relationship is critical to comprehending the PLA's influence in politics and policies in contemporary China. This section traces the historic symbiosis of the CCP and the PLA, and the historical debate on whether China should have a Party or State army. This discussion generates the following conclusions:

1. Controlling the gun is a unique source of crucial political power.
2. The gun alone will not control the Party; however, by controlling the gun, one has the greatest chance of establishing and then consolidating control in the Party.⁵⁵
3. The PLA is structurally separate from the State.

To understand why the PLA has maintained such a uniquely important position in China's political power structure and policy-making arena, one has to understand the shared, intertwined, and nonetheless conflicted past of the military and the Party. The PLA has been an inalienable part of the Party since the CCP's inception in the early 1920s.

The History of Symbiosis of the Party and the Military

When the CCP had just begun its uprising against the Nationalist (KMT) government, it had not yet established the system of having political commissars in the armed forces. Rather, a "Party representative" (*dang daibiao*) was initially designated for each level at or above that of regiment (*dangbu shezai tuanli*). After the 1927 Sanwan Reorganization, Mao Zedong established the principle of organizing Party branches by recruiting from among populations of troops. In effect, the Party branches were established at the level of "military companies" (*zhibu shezai lianshang*), and an

“instructor” (*zhidaoyuan*) was designated to companies, while political commissars were set up at the level of battalion and above. The institutionalization of pervasive Party control that Mao established transformed scattered and demoralized troops into a disciplined Red Army under constant ideological indoctrination.⁵⁶ In this way, since many members of the army were both soldiers and party apparatchiks, the Party organization could ensure absolute control over the army.

Since the birth of the Red Army in 1927 (later renamed the PLA in 1945), the army has been both a participant in and protector of the Party. The Party’s survival hinged on the army’s support and protection. In 1928, Mao established the principle of “the military helping the development of the local Party,” which, in reality, placed the military over the local Party.⁵⁷ Thereafter, the Party and the military merged in Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, where Mao had unified control, with the Party embedded inside the military structure. As the Party faced constant threats to its survival during this early period of its existence, it blended with the military into a cohesive political-security apparatus.⁵⁸ This formative experience established the tradition of an “Army-Party” (*jundang*) coalition — with the Army notably in the first position.

Although the principle of the “Party commanding the gun” was established through the Gutian Resolution in 1929, this meeting did not settle the core issue of who represents the Party, which had been a subject of debate in 1928-29.⁵⁹ The other side of the coin is that the political commissar system was firmly established within the Red Army, despite the professional soldiers’ initial pushback.⁶⁰ The symbiosis and dualism (*nizhong youwo, wozhong youni*) of the Red Army and the CCP originated from Mao’s own method of seizing authority over the Party by first acquiring dominance over the

military. This habit matured through multiple reiterations as Mao learned this was the principle path to Party control, an approach he subsequently followed for the rest of his life.

Mao's Power Through the Gun Barrel

Mao rose to power by first leveraging military success to assume leadership of the military. Mao then used this leadership to dominate the Party, which provided further evidence of a political truism summarized by historian Gao Hua: “the gun by itself will not control the Party; but by controlling the gun, one has the greatest advantage of establishing and then consolidating control in the Party.”⁶¹

Although Mao was one of the primary founders of the Red Army, beginning in 1932 his control over it was gradually undermined, as Russians commanded the Communist International (Comintern). The CCP during these early years faithfully and methodically followed the Comintern's instructions. By 1933, the Internationalists – those CCP cadres who studied in Russia and followed the Comintern closely – such as Bo Gu and Zhang Wentian had substantial control within the CCP. Power struggles within the Party deprived Mao of any control over the military.⁶² Mao was effectively sidelined and was not even a member of the Chinese Revolutionary Military Committee, the CCP's military decision-making command structure.

Mao was only brought back into the military leadership after repeated, devastating military defeats that seriously threatened the survival of both the army and the CCP. Mao made his way back into the Party's core leadership after the Zunyi Meeting of 1935, in which he was called on to reverse the fortunes of the Party and the military. Following

the Zunyi Meeting, Mao became one member of a three-person military commanding team, though Mao ranked lower than Zhou Enlai.⁶³ Zhou represented the Party in military decision-making, and thus Mao was essentially designated to serve as Zhou's assistant. As such, Mao was allowed to share the power of commanding the Red Army. However, Mao and Zhou reversed roles soon after Mao's military strategy started to show success, with Zhou becoming Mao's assistant.⁶⁴

In 1935-36, Mao's military strategy of maintaining a high degree of tactical mobility achieved substantive success.⁶⁵ The Party and the Red Army managed to resist the KMT's onslaught. Mao's military victories improved his reputation, which gave him the impetus to expand his influence and control from military affairs to Party and political affairs, including the direction of Party-military development.⁶⁶ By August 1937, Mao was elected General Secretary of the Military Committee, which meant that he officially became the top Party representative in the Red Army. Without Mao's military success and then dominance of the army, Mao would have been outmaneuvered by ideologues during factional struggles within the Party. Mao's own ascension in the Party proved that controlling the gun is a unique source of crucial political power, a lesson that was repeatedly demonstrated in political power struggles during the following decades.

More fundamentally, a closer examination of the CCP's and the PLA's history shows "the Party commands the gun" was not the hard and fast rule it is assumed to be.⁶⁷ When something is repeated with such conviction for so long, one tends to believe it has a high degree of historical accuracy. However, if one traces the actual circumstances of this slogan from its inception, one discovers that Mao combined it with a seemingly contradictory slogan: "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."⁶⁸ In essence,

Mao was drawing attention to his own dual identity. In front of the army leaders, Mao acted as the leader of the Party and urged them to always follow the principle of being subordinate to the Party. Mao was signaling that the military should never question his authority and must obey him unconditionally. However, when addressing another audience, such as Bo Gu, Wang Ming, and other Internationalists who competed with Mao for power and control within the Party, Mao then put on his other hat as preeminent military leader. Mao would emphasize that “with guns, the Party could be made” or “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”⁶⁹ It was a strategy that worked well, since the Internationalists had neither fought in any battles, nor were rooted in a military tradition. In the 1930s and 1940s, the reality was that without military success, the Party could not have survived. The military was in cahoots with Mao over these struggles, since it suited the military’s interests to keep its indispensability at the forefront of the debate. This formed the basis of the military’s support for Mao, and, following the Yan’an Rectification Campaign, was exemplified by the Red Army senior commander Zhu De’s active support.⁷⁰

Structural Segregation Due to Party-military Arrangements, and the State Army Vs.

Party Army Debate

When examining China’s Party-military relationship, one must inevitably confront the paradox between the constitutionally-designated chain of command and the reality of who the PLA actually answers to. More precisely, should the PLA be built as a State or Party army? Public discussion of this question has been taboo since the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. To even publicly raise the possibility of building the PLA as a State

army — a military that is subordinate to the government system — appears to be off limits.⁷¹ Yet this subject is a central feature of the current Chinese constitution. China's first (1954) and current (1982) constitutions both maintain that the *State* (not the Party) Central Military Commission (CMC), a government branch, commands all of the armed forces and reports to the People's Congress, and the People's Congress elects or deposes the chairman of the State CMC.⁷²

The real military leadership, the Party or the CCP Central Military Commission (CMC), has no legal status under China's first or current constitution, which are arguably China's most important constitutions. The question of whether the PLA is a Party or State army is important because the answer to this question fundamentally alters the PLA's status vis-a-vis the civilian foreign affairs system, which is itself a creature of the state. The fact that the PLA is a Party army, and thus not a part of the government's decision-making chain, leads to the institutionalized disconnect between the two, and systematizes a deficient coordination milieu between the military and the government in the arena of foreign and security policy-making.

The PLA leadership structure is distinctly different from that of the United States and other Western militaries.⁷³ The PLA's status relative to and relationship with the government is unique and forms a principal cause of the disconnect and lack of coordination between the PLA and China's foreign ministry (MFA). These differences derive from the particular nature of the relationship between the CCP and the PLA. Thus, to understand the PLA's role in foreign policy-making since 1978, it is necessary to examine the historical context of the Party and the military. This is a complicated saga,

but one can begin by examining the debate over whether the PLA should be a State or Party military.

The CCP first raised the question of nationalizing the Chinese military in 1945. This proposal was then codified in legal documents after the CCP won the civil war in 1949, but was never operationalized or detailed on paper. In reality, the CCP retained ultimate control over the PLA.

Zhou Enlai's 1945 Proposal to Nationalize the Military

Zhou Enlai proposed nationalizing the military following the end of the Sino-Japanese war in 1945.⁷⁴ During the ensuing negotiations between the CCP and the KMT in January 1946, Zhou pointed out that “China’s (current) military institution should follow the model of democratic countries, especially that of the United States... We agreed very much to separate the military from the party and that the military should belong to the state rather than the Party. We must clearly separate the military from the party.”⁷⁵ Based on the CCP’s proposals, the KMT and the CCP reached an agreement on the nationalization of the military in 1946, embedded in the Double Ten Agreement. This agreement stipulated: “the military belongs to the state; the military’s responsibility is safeguarding the country and loving its people”; “the military is to be separated from any party”; “all parties are prohibited from conducting any open or secret activities inside the military”; and “any party or individual shall not use the military as the tool for political struggle.”⁷⁶

In June 1946, a civil war between the KMT and CCP broke out, effectively making the aforementioned agreement null and void. Mao and the CCP in the following

years still attempted to hold the moral high ground by insisting that the CCP's goal was to build a democratic government. Moreover, all the publicized military orders had to be issued under the name of the "People's Revolutionary Military Commission of China," which was under the *government*, not the CCP. However, internal military documents, which were for military eyes only, continued to show that they were issued from the "CCP Central Military Commission," thus indicating that in practice the CCP retained ultimate control over the army.⁷⁷

1949 Interim Constitution

The Common Program, publicized as the interim Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, stipulated that the PRC armed forces were under the command of the "People's Revolutionary Military Commission" (PRMC) of the government.⁷⁸ Mao was elected the Chairman of the PRMC during its first meeting, on October 1, 1949. The PRMC contained both CCP and non-CCP members, including one KMT general who served as one of its vice chairmen. In the published memoirs of all the non-CCP members of the PRMC — all formerly KMT military officers who switched allegiance to the CCP — none described any details of their participation in PRMC work.⁷⁹ In reality, the CCP Politburo and Secretariat — the Party leadership — was the ultimate decision-making authority regarding military affairs. For example, the decision to cut the PLA from 5.4 million soldiers to roughly 2.8 million was made during the Third Plenary Session of the CCP 7th Central Committee on June 6, 1950, not during a meeting of the PRMC. Also, the decision to enter the Korean War was made during the CCP Central Committee Secretariat's meeting on October 2 and subsequent Politburo

meetings on October 4 and 5, 1950. On October 6, Zhou Enlai held a meeting of the PRMC, during which Zhou relayed the CCP Central Committee's decision to enter the Korean War. There is no evidence that the PRMC ever played a role in these decision-making processes.

1954 Constitution

Eventually, even the PRMC's official but essentially hollow control of the army was delicately removed. The PRC's first Constitution, published in September 1954, abolished the PRMC and established the PRC Defense Commission (PRCDC) in its place. The PRCDC was composed of the CCP CMC, as well as non-CCP members who were KMT generals. It stipulated that the PRC's armed forces "belong to the people" and are "commanded by the PRC chairman," who would also be the chairman of the PRCDC. Four out of 15 vice chairmen and 26 out of 81 members of the PRCDC were former KMT generals. The 1954 Constitution did not explicitly state that the PRCDC was the leading agency commanding the PRC's armed forces.

According to the 1954 Constitution, the Ministry of National Defense (MND), which is under the State Council (a component of the State's system), was established as the military arm of the government. Thus, the PLA was still designated a State army in the 1954 Constitution. Such a conception of the PLA was operationalized in the "Regulation on PLA Officer Service," published in February 1955. According to this regulation, the prime minister of the State Council would determine promotions from senior colonel to full general, while the defense minister would oversee promotions from major to colonel.

While the State was granted some power over the military, in reality the CCP CMC was the main decision-maker with regard to military affairs. The schizophrenia about who had official power and control over the PLA began with the CCP's promise, stipulated in the Double Ten Agreement, to grant the State ultimate control over the military, which was given in order to gain wider acceptance for the CCP's legitimacy. Ultimately, the CCP was unwilling to honor its side of the bargain after winning the civil war. The charade of giving control over the PLA to the government while vesting the Party leadership with the real authority is the root of this confusion.

Taking Back Leadership of the PLA in 1955

Within one month of the 1954 Constitution being issued, the Politburo decided to reestablish the CCP CMC's ultimate authority to "lead the overall military affairs." In the "Regulation on PLA Military Officer Service" issued in February 1955, it was explicitly stipulated that the PLA was "the people's army led by the CCP and Comrade Mao Zedong." If establishing the PRMC was a way for the CCP to create the illusion that it was sharing the power of leading the PLA, done in order to placate the non-CCP people in the government in 1949, Mao and the CCP took back even nominal state leadership of the PLA in 1955. There are several possible explanations as to why Mao revised the goal of nationalizing the military at this time.

First, it is possible that Mao and the CCP were never ready to share power and control over the PLA, and therefore nationalization of the military was never a sincere goal but only a smoke screen used to deceive others and obtain wider support from the non-CCP "democratic parties," including some in the KMT.⁸⁰ Second, the Soviet Union

could have exerted influence on and even intervened in the question of a “new democracy” revolution (*xin minzhu zhuyi geming*).⁸¹ Stalin and the Soviet Union never endorsed the concept of “new democracy,” which the CCP could not ignore since in the early 1950s the Soviet Union’s support for and aid to China was substantial.⁸² Therefore, after seeking Stalin’s advice, the CCP leadership could have decided to formally shift the CCP’s general line from pursuing “new democracy” to “transition to socialism.” By dropping this ideal, Mao abandoned nationalization of the military. A third possible explanation is that China’s self-perceived success in the Korean War greatly consolidated Mao’s domestic support. After the end of the Korean War, Mao’s confidence grew and he genuinely believed that China could in 10-15 years complete industrialization and achieve a socialist transformation — just one step before realizing Communism.⁸³

The second and third explanations more logically elucidate why nationalizing the PLA in the late 1950s was abandoned. China’s heavy reliance on Stalin and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s forced the CCP to follow his ideological advice, and Mao’s personal ambition and pride made him want to exert firmer control over the army. Thus, while Mao dropped the ideal of nationalizing the PLA by the mid-1950s, it was nonetheless written in China’s interim Constitution in 1949 and its first constitution, which resulted in protracted bureaucratic turf wars between the MND and the General Staff Department (GSD).

Hollowing-Out the Ministry of National Defense

As described above, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) was born under problematic circumstances. From the perspective of the constitution and national

legislation, the PLA was a State army. As part of the PRC government and led by the State Council, the MND was subject to the leadership of the State Council and the supervision of the National People's Congress, both of which had non-CCP personnel occupying high positions. So, by outward appearances, the PLA answered to the MND, and therefore the government system.

In reality, the PLA only followed the orders of the CCP CMC, an organ of the Party. Therefore, after the MND was established in 1954, the PLA nominally answered to both State and Party organizations and had a dual identity. In this regard, the Chinese system fundamentally differed from that of the Soviet Union. The Soviet military's structure placed the MND in a real position of leadership. If China had followed such a course, it would have run counter to the principle of "the Party commanding the gun." From a strictly legal perspective, China's constitution did not recognize the military's true leadership, the CCP CMC, since its legal status was not addressed in the constitution.

The disconnect delineated above between appearance and substance led to an operational problem: the issuance of CMC orders. Any orders between the CMC and the military that would not be publicized to the outside world would be issued in the CMC's name. Any orders passed to the military by the CMC or Party system that were supposed to have a non-military audience would be transferred through the MND. The logic was that according to the 1954 Constitution, the MND, as the government's military arm, should be the only entity issuing military orders known to the non-military world.

Therefore, even though all military orders were given by the CMC, those released to the non-military world had to be transmitted as MND orders. As a result, there was constant confusion as to which channel the orders should be sent through. The GSD, which was

responsible for drafting CMC orders, was in constant conflict with the MND because of disagreements over which orders should be issued by the CMC directly and which by the MND.⁸⁴

The procedural problem of which entity should issue orders triggered a deeper rift between the GSD and the MND over the command and control structure. This friction was amplified by interpersonal competition such as that between Marshal Peng Dehuai and General Su Yu.⁸⁵ Marshal Peng, who served as Vice Chairman of the CMC, dominated the routine work of military affairs from 1952-59 and was appointed the PRC's first Defense Minister in 1954. But problems quickly arose as Marshal Peng, the most powerful officer in the PLA at the time, now headed the MND, an agency that was not a powerful institution. The contest for power between Marshal Peng and General Su, the Chief of the General Staff, was at its core a dispute over whether the constitution would determine the power structure. Was the MND, a branch of government, a real link in the PLA's chain of command, or did it merely exist as a symbolic institution?

According to the logic of the 1954 Constitution, the GSD should have reported to the MND. However, the principle of the "Party commanding the gun" dictated that the CMC, a Party institution, should be the top military leadership. Such logic would make the MND nothing but a hollow shell and establish the CMC as an institution with more power relative to the MND. Additionally, MND would not be an executive and enforcement branch of the CMC. All general departments, including the GSD, were not under the MND's control, since the MND was by definition a department of the State, not the Party. If so, the GSD only answered to the CMC. In reality, the Party *did* command "the gun," which meant that the reality fit more with General Su's argument.

In March 1955, General Su proposed that the GSD draft regulations outlining the respective responsibilities of the MND and the GSD. After five draft copies, the turf battles were still unresolved. During the GSD's planning meetings in January 1958, Su said, "we need to fight for power...not personal power, but demarcation of work responsibility."⁸⁶ Later in 1958, the struggle between the MND and GSD devolved into ad hominem attacks against Su through an enlarged meeting of the CMC, which 1,400 PLA officers attended. During this meeting, Huang Kecheng, Su's deputy and Peng Dehuai's former subordinate, replaced Su as chief of general staff (CGS). Combined with interpersonal rivalries inside the PLA, the confusion caused by the Party-military arrangement not only led to Su's purge, but also was the root cause of the perpetual distrust in the triangular relationship between the CGS, the military's top leader (the CMC vice chairman or, less often, the defense minister), and the CMC chairman (the Party's top leader).

In 1959, Mao purged Peng Dehuai, who had become the all-powerful Defense Minister after General Su's downfall. At the Lushan Conference, Marshal Peng directly disagreed with Mao regarding the policies of the Great Leap Forward, which called for crash industrialization. Marshal Peng's stance resulted in the naming and shaming of Peng and Huang Kecheng as heads of an anti-CCP clique. Lin Biao succeeded Peng as both the Vice Chairman of the CMC and Defense Minister. Luo Ruiqing was named CGS. In reality, Lin Biao avoided most of the daily operations either because of his health problems or because of his fear of taking political risks. Luo was left to run the CMC and the GSD, and became the most powerful CGS in the PLA's history.

After Peng's downfall in 1959, the role of the GSD as the sole executive agency that carried out the CMC's orders (rather than the MND) was played up on Luo's watch. After December 1960, four out of five deputy chiefs of general staff had no other positions, indicating the professionalization of the GSD's top positions. In comparison, during this time positions such as deputy defense minister were regarded as honorable positions left for those who could not work either because of health issues (such as Chen Geng) or due to Mao's lack of trust in that individual (such as Su Yu), rather than positions with substantial power. The MND was in this sense completely gutted.

Even though Lin Biao served as Defense Minister beginning in 1959, his political ambition far exceeded leading the MND or even the CMC. Luo Ruiqing, the all-powerful CGS, stepped into the same trap as Su Yu by having to be selective in terms of what would be reported to Defense Minister Lin Biao, then the PLA's top leader, and what would be reported to Mao, the CMC Chairman and the Party's top leader. Eventually, Lin believed Luo intentionally bypassed him on a few significant issues, which was one of the major reasons that Luo was purged.⁸⁷ Therefore, the consequences of the conflict between the GSD and the MND, as evidenced by the cases of Su Yu, Peng Dehuai, Luo Ruiqing, and Lin Biao, were the ascendance of the Party-dominated command and control system, and a hollowing out of the MND under the State system.

Moving ahead to the 1975 and 1978 constitutions, both explicitly stipulated, "the CCP Central Committee chairman commands all the armed forces." However, the 1982 Constitution, which remains in effect, reverted back to the position that the *PRC* Central Military Commission (CMC) commands all the armed forces and reports to the People's Congress, and that the People's Congress elects or deposes the chairman of the *PRC*

CMC. However, to prevent the “schizophrenia” problem of the 1950s that arose as a result of a dual leadership system, the PRC CMC’s membership and function exactly mirrors the CCP CMC’s. In other words, the PRC CMC presently exists on paper, but has the same personnel as the Party’s CMC. Since power on both Commissions derives from military rank and position – not from the State – the PRC CMC exists only as a symbolic institution.

It is not a historic coincidence that soldiers and diplomats do not work well with each other in China. Rather, there is a fundamental reason for this: throughout the PRC’s history, they have not even sat in the same room together. The Party-military arrangement dictated that the Party, not the State, commands the PLA. This was not a significant problem prior to the 1980s, because Mao, Zhou, and even Deng from 1978-81 personally oversaw both the military and foreign affairs. However, since the 1980s, the top leaders’ portfolios have shrunk, and they tend to oversee only the most sensitive and strategic foreign policy issues, while leaving the less pressing issues and most of the policy details to professional diplomats and soldiers. Therefore, the organic and systematic segregation between the military and China’s civilian foreign affairs system is a result of institutional design and the Party-military arrangement.

Frictions between diplomats and soldiers are common in every country, regardless of their political systems. Officials’ difference of opinion regarding policies comes naturally from their different missions and roles – where they sit. In China, however, the divide between the civilian foreign affairs system and the military is much deeper and wider than it is in countries in which the military swears allegiance to the State. The organic, systematic divide has produced barriers to cooperation and coordination, and

sowed the seeds of competition and friction between these two large and powerful bureaucratic systems. In China, diplomats and soldiers are predisposed to be jealous of each other's power.

Since the late 1980s, the MND has truly become an arm of the State Council, with a mission of handling military diplomacy and coordinating military recruitment, defense mobilization, and disaster relief between the military and the government. The era of the MND acting as the "face" of the CMC to the outside world is long gone. The MND is by no means part of the chain of command and control in the PLA, but rather is an entity with an important-sounding name but no substantial power, that is not well-staffed, and does not have much reach into the military regions or services.⁸⁸ The position of Defense Minister is an honorary position without substantial power, unless a CMC vice chairman concurrently holds this position.⁸⁹

The MND remains a hollowed out organization. It does not play a notable role in enhancing the military's influence in foreign policy-making. Nor does the MND serve as an institutionalized channel to transmit the opinions of the civilian foreign affairs system into the military's deliberations, when the PLA shapes its positions on foreign and security policies. Therefore, by design, the PLA and the government have no direct organic structural bonds in terms of foreign and security policy-making. Rather, the two bureaucracies meet at the level of the Party system, which then makes the Party-military relationship a more important factor when discussing the PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making.

If the MND held real power within the PLA, the military and the civilian foreign affairs system would naturally be more integrated, and there would be an established

coordination platform. If this were the case, these bureaucracies would interact differently, thus altering how the PLA's influence in foreign policy is effectuated. However, the reality is that the PLA and MFA remain in two different political spheres, independent of each other, and this separation raises coordination and communication problems.

Who is the "Party"? The PLA's Intervention in Politics

The authority, status, function, or composition of the CCP Central Military Commission (CMC), an organ of the Party, has never been clearly written in the nation's constitutions (*xianfa*). Neither has it been written in the CCP or the Party's Constitution (*dangzhang*).⁹⁰ From 1977 to 2012, the Party's Constitution was revised eight times (1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012).⁹¹ As the last chapter indicates, the rules for promoting PLA officers in most positions have become more institutionalized and generally merit-based. However, rules about the appointment of the CMC chairman as well as the vice chairmen and other members of the CMC, the apex of the military leadership, are much more opaque and unpredictable.

When considering the principle "the Party commands the gun," who composes the Party? Deng's case would indicate that "the Party" is its real decision-maker or the person who carries the most influence over decision-making. In some instances, the Party's real decision-maker differs from the Party's nominal top leader. Such was the case when Hua Guofeng was the nominal leader from the end of 1978 to 1980 and wore the three hats of supreme leadership: the State, the Party, and the PLA. However, during

this time period Deng had the final say. This scenario repeated itself when Hu Yaobang was the Party General Secretary from 1981-87 and Zhao Ziyang was the Party General Secretary from 1987-89. Deng gave up his seat on the CCP Central Committee and no longer had any formal position in the CCP after 1987, save the CMC chairmanship. Zhao Ziyang, then CCP Party Secretary and the top boss of the Party by design, held only the position of the 1st Executive Vice Chairman of CMC. Yet, until late-1989 Deng was still officially the ultimate decision-making authority of the PLA and, even without the CMC chairmanship, he maintained such authority till the mid-1990s. This happened as well in Jiang's era – though in a more ambiguous way – during the leadership transition between Jiang and Hu Jintao. Hu took over the positions of CCP General Secretary and President from Jiang in 2002, but Jiang kept the CMC chairmanship from 2002-04. As a result, Hu was subordinate to Jiang in the CMC between 2002 and 2004, though Hu was the Party's top leader.

Whether the Party commands the military, and who in actuality represents the Party in terms of authority over the military, is at best an ambiguous issue. The emphasis each top political leader puts on his control over the PLA reflects the special relationship between the military and political powers in China. Those who control the military relentlessly pull the military into politics to support them. However, history shows that while the military's loyalty has been rewarded through this arrangement, its participation in political struggles is often short-lived. In fact, the military has been penalized in the long run, since political leaders' reliance on the military also creates a sense of vulnerability. The more reliant political leaders are on the military, the more vulnerable these leaders feel. Eventually, the leaders need to address this vulnerability and

consolidate their positions by circumscribing the power of military officers. Therefore, the military is ordered to obey the rule that “the Party commands the gun” after the question of “who the Party is” is settled. This cycle has repeatedly occurred throughout the PRC’s history.

Four cases demonstrate this cycle and are worth further analysis: the purge of Marshal Peng Dehuai after he supported Mao in the decision to enter the Korean War; the demise of Lin Biao after the PLA was pulled in to support the leftist movement; the reduction of the military’s involvement in politics in the early 1980s after the meteoric rise and subsequent arrest of the Gang of Four; and the downfall of the Yang brothers after they explicitly supported Deng’s economic policies during his 1992 southern tour.

Most military leaders — including Lin Biao, Nie Rongzhen, and Su Yu — were not supportive of entering the Korean War when the top leadership was debating this subject. However, Mao was determined to participate in this war, and when he faced resistance from the professional soldiers he called on Peng Dehuai to command the army into the war. In October 1950, Peng, then Chairman of the Politico-Military Commission of Northwest China, answered Mao’s call and returned to Beijing from Xi’an. Prior to 1949, Peng and Mao had a tumultuous relationship. However, upon Peng’s decision to side with Mao on the issue of the Korean War, Peng was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the People’s Volunteer Army in Korea.⁹² In 1954, Peng was awarded the positions of Minister of Defense and CMC Vice Chairman in charge of the CMC’s daily operations. But differences between Peng and Mao reemerged as he disagreed with Mao’s economic policies during the Great Leap Forward. The rivalry between Peng and Mao culminated in Peng writing an open letter criticizing Mao at the 1959 Lushan Conference. Peng was

then labeled the leader of an anti-Party clique and purged, and later publicly humiliated during the Cultural Revolution. Peng was formally tried and sentenced to life in prison in 1970 and died in prison in 1974.

In 1959, following Peng Dehuai's challenge to Mao at the Lushan Conference, Lin Biao came to Mao's defense by launching fierce attacks against Peng, resulting in Lin's ascendance in the PLA.⁹³ There have been conflicting interpretations regarding Lin's motivations. Many PLA officers accused him of failing to represent the PLA by promoting the policy of "support the left" and repeatedly purging the military through radical means.⁹⁴ Some historians and Lin Biao's former subordinates have called into question the assertion that Lin lusted for power, noting that Lin's political power peaked in 1969 under Mao. Lin arguably had personal ambitions and publicly assisted Mao in taking down Liu Shaoqi, but it is likely that Lin realized the inherent risk of being Mao's anointed successor after witnessing the fates of Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi.

It is clear that Mao, politically weakened by the Great Leap Forward's (1958-62) catastrophic failure, badly needed the PLA's support.⁹⁵ The Great Leap Forward, which some scholars estimate resulted in the deaths of approximately 30 million Chinese, significantly weakened Mao's power in the Party. Mao became defensive and suspected that factions within the Party were trying to remove him from government. When Defense Minister Peng Dehuai sharply criticized Mao's mistake in launching the Great Leap Forward in 1959, Mao replaced Peng with Lin Biao. Lin became Mao's loyal ally and lieutenant. Luo Ruiqing, then Chief of General Staff, organized hundreds of Mao's quotes into a book entitled *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, which became known as the "Little Red Book," but Lin took the credit.⁹⁶ In 1964, Lin required every PLA soldier to

read the book and emphasized adherence to the Party line and loyalty to Mao. Mao, in turn, praised the PLA as an example for the Chinese people. Mao and Lin reinforced each other's status. Eventually, Mao's image reached new heights and a personality cult formed around him, with a generation of radicalized youth following him, while the PLA transformed completely into "Mao's army."⁹⁷

The PLA stood on the frontlines in elevating Mao to that of a supreme authority and played a major role in carrying out the Cultural Revolution (CR). Mao relied on the PLA's help to attack the first-line party leadership in late 1965.⁹⁸ By August 1966, each of the PLA's ten marshals had been promoted into the Politburo. Then, in 1966, the CR caused economic and political order to break down, and this mass movement Mao called for devolved into bitter divisions and lawless violence. As a result, Mao needed the military's political support and operational assistance to stabilize the situation.⁹⁹ After the 11th Plenary Session of the 8th National Congress of the CCP in August 1966, Liu Shaoqi, Mao's rival, was purged. Lin Biao was awarded and made the only Vice Chairman of the Party, Defense Minister, and thus heir apparent to Mao, with his ranking in the Party elevated from sixth to second.¹⁰⁰

While Lin Biao remained publicly supportive of Mao's policies, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, – even personally verbally assaulting Liu Shaoqi – in private he had misgivings. As early as 1958, Lin wrote in his notes that the Great Leap Forward was a result of Mao "messing things up based on his fantasies" and commented in his personal notes that Mao "was someone who does one thing and says another."¹⁰¹ In September 1966, Lin confessed to his daughter Lin Liheng, "this is not a Cultural Revolution, but a killing spree under the guise of a Cultural Revolution"

(*zhe bushi wenhua dageming, ershi wenhua dayaoming*).¹⁰² During his secretary's private briefing on the Cultural Revolution's progress, Lin Biao talked to himself, saying "it is not a Cultural Revolution, but an armed revolution" (*zhebushi wenhua dageming, ershi wuhua dageming*).¹⁰³ In the spring of 1967, his daughter asked him whether it was right for Liu Shaoqi to be taken down. Lin replied, arguing that Liu did not do anything to deserve the attacks Mao launched against him.¹⁰⁴

By 1967, Mao became dissatisfied with Lin Biao when he found out that local PLA units either remained neutral or joined the civilian party leadership in opposing the radical leftists and their attempts to seize power. By 1970, Mao had decisively shifted to a position opposing Lin. Mao had never intended to truly transfer power to Lin. Rather, elevating Lin's position to that of heir apparent was a temporary tactic used for the purpose of defeating Liu Shaoqi.¹⁰⁵ But, unpredictably from Mao's perspective, Lin was able to consolidate his political position after the 9th National Congress of the CCP (in 1969) and thereafter became "a tail too big to wag."¹⁰⁶ In 1970-71, Mao tightened the screws on Lin Biao and, by purging Chen Boda, sent him the signal that he would be the next to be purged.¹⁰⁷ This ultimately led to the 913 Incident in 1971, in which Lin, allegedly following a failed coup attempt, tried to defect in a plane but his plane crashed into the desert, killing him.¹⁰⁸

In 1976, the PLA chief, Marshal Ye Jianying, convinced Hua Guofeng, Mao's designated successor, to agree to use a special PLA unit to take down the Gang of Four. A wider military operation was staged to occupy or temporarily control major Party and government institutions and news media offices.¹⁰⁹ Geng Biao, a close associate of Marshal Ye, and Chi Haotian, then Vice Political Commissar of the Beijing Military

Region, were in charge of the operations.¹¹⁰ The PLA was instrumental in bringing down the Gang of Four and appeared to reap substantial benefits from it. However, the PLA's sails were quickly trimmed in the early 1980s. Deng quickly decided to reduce the PLA's representation throughout the Party's power structure, and its membership in the CCPCC Politburo was decreased from ten in 1982 to three in 1985 (not including one alternate member). The proportion of uniformed military members on the 210-member Central Committee was 22 percent in 1987, roughly half of what it was at the height of the PLA's political power in 1969-71 after the 9th CCP Congress.¹¹¹ Deng personally decided to put limits on the number of uniformed military personnel in the Politburo.¹¹²

The Yang brothers' downfall in 1992, detailed in the next chapter, was the most recent case of China's complicated Party-military relations. The above cases, while arguably the most prominent examples of the PLA's intervention in China's domestic politics, do not represent an exhaustive list of this pattern in China's history. In all these cases, alternate causal explanations are possible. For instance, the PLA's punishment can be seen as the price to pay for military leaders' personal ambitions, or the result of Mao's distrustful and erratic personality. Nonetheless, a consistent pattern emerges: the PLA is needed and pulled in, then is momentarily rewarded for its intervention in politics; after a brief period, the PLA's newly acquired status presents a threat to political leaders, who check the military leaders, thus forcing them to return to their original subordinate position. In the end, the principle that "the Party commands the gun" is reestablished.

The PLA's Corporate Interest

Does the PLA have a separate corporate interest, analogous to that of Western militaries under democratic regimes? The PLA demonstrated in the 1950s and 1960s that it had disagreements with Mao and the Party on policies that were not security-related, from the Great Leap Forward to the Supporting the Left campaign. A majority of PLA officers were mostly silent and went along with Mao's policies, despite privately holding grudges. The senior PLA officers, despite serious divisions and differences among themselves, had consensus on one policy position, which reflected a distinct corporate interest of the military – the political turbulence that at the time permeated the Party and Chinese society should not be brought into the military. When this goal could not be obtained, the PLA attempted to insulate the field armies from the chaos and violence, in order to keep a minimum of military effectiveness.

Despite the PLA's resistance, the radicalism and chaos of the Cultural Revolution that swept the whole country nonetheless seeped into the military. All of the PLA's units were badly damaged, except for the field armies charged with the mission of standing on the frontlines during war. Although the PLA maintained its institutional integrity, it suffered from high-level politicization, which led to intensified factional struggles within the military and countless internal persecutions of innocent officers. The PLA was badly battered by the political campaigns it was deeply involved in, with the majority of routine military training suspended or disrupted. The military was ingloriously pulled into the civilian world and took the place of the dismembered civilian government to maintain some semblance of stability and governance. However, in some places, the military also committed unspeakable atrocities.¹¹³ It is difficult to differentiate the corporate interest of the PLA from the interest of the Party during this period. The 913 Incident caused the

military's morale to reach a new low. This state of chaos was sustained until the Gang of Four's arrest. The moderates of the Party and the PLA have since then reunited and formed an alliance to push the country forward to restoration and economic reform.

In 1974, Deng Xiaoping launched a campaign to bring order and discipline back to the PLA. This effort was sidetracked when Mao purged Deng, but was then reintroduced in 1978, after Deng was rehabilitated. Under Deng's program, officers who benefited from the Cultural Revolution's radical politicization and were quickly promoted during that period were removed from their posts, while those who were wrongly persecuted were restored and their names cleared. When Deng's reforms took hold in the early 1980s and he attempted to close the revolving door between the military and the government, the PLA's corporate interest started to reemerge. The PLA was ordered to return to the barracks and withdraw completely from governance. The PLA, derogatively referred to as "the military faction," had its reputation damaged due to its deep and controversial involvement in the extremely unpopular Cultural Revolution.

With its reputation in shambles, the PLA itself suffered from extremely bitter internal division, as almost every officer who served through the Cultural Revolution was either a victim wrongly persecuted by others, one who wrongly persecuted others, or both. This problem was so severe that Deng decided to draw former PLA officers who served mostly in the civilian world, and therefore were not involved in the persecutions during the Cultural Revolution, back to the PLA to run the CMC. This group of officers included Geng Biao, who served most of his career as a diplomat and was called back to serve as the CMC's Deputy General Secretary (1979-81) and then Defense Minister (1981-83), and Yang Shangkun, who had been a civilian administrator in elite politics for most of his

career and was asked by Deng to serve as General Secretary and then Vice Chairman of the CMC (1981-92).

Compared to professional soldiers, those who ran the CMC in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, with mixed or mostly civilian experience and expertise, obstructed the expression and realization of the PLA's separate corporate interest. The PLA endured a steep budget cut of almost one-fourth in 1981 in comparison with its 1979 budget, and was ordered by Deng to "be patient." In the 1980s and 1990s, professional soldiers such as Zhang Aiping (Defense Minister) and Zhang Zhen (President of National Defense University) expressed their opposition to this policy quietly and behind closed doors.¹¹⁴ However, most of the PLA's rank and file unconditionally followed this policy guidance and suffered from the resulting hardship and erosion of military effectiveness. In order to partially compensate for the cut in the official defense budget, Yang Shangkun came up with the idea that the PLA should run independent businesses, which professional officers strongly but futilely opposed.¹¹⁵

The 1989 Tiananmen Incident, in which the PLA was called upon to use force to clear out the protesters and restore order, despite commanding officers' opposition and in some cases defiance, drew a clear line between the corporate interest of the PLA and the interest of the Party. PLA officers interviewed acknowledged that Tiananmen was widely viewed within the military as bringing dishonor to the PLA. At the same time, many blamed the reformers and student leaders for pushing reform "too rashly" and "prematurely," which they argue instead stunted real reform by almost a decade.

Following Lin Biao's death, it was not until the Yang brothers' downfall in 1992 that the military leadership returned to the hands of professional soldiers. After Admiral

Liu Huaqing and General Zhang Zhen, both seasoned professional soldiers, took the CMC's reins in 1992, the PLA started to express its corporate interest coherently. This was reflected first and foremost in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, which was the first "high-tech" war characterized by the massive employment of cutting-edge weapons systems, including long-range, precision-guided strike weapons. The Gulf War demonstrated to the PLA "the complete failure of the Soviet-style weapons systems and war-fighting theories."¹¹⁶ The PLA subsequently repositioned itself to adjust to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) by revamping the strategic thinking of "active defense," which emphasizes powerful counterattacks and offense. The PLA also shifted its military preparations to focus on "winning a localized high-tech war," a term coined by General Zhang Zhen.¹¹⁷ Additionally, Admiral Liu Huaqing drove the effort to develop and purchase high-tech armaments, which he built consensus around and became a focal point for building the PLA. Finally, the PLA's budget started to consistently increase.

The PLA's professionalization has greatly accelerated since 1992, though the Party and its leadership still tried to maintain effective control over the military. The rules of the game have nonetheless changed in the Party-military relationship. The PLA, with a clearly and coherently expressed interest in professionalization, modernization, and military-building, could no longer return to its pre-1992 limbo. For the Party, the train has left the station. To maintain control over the military, the Party and its leadership not only have to accommodate the PLA's parochial corporate interests such as an increased budget and heightened military modernization, but also must allow the PLA to provide input on which direction the country should go in and what the best policies are to take it

there. As political power increasingly fragments in the post-Deng era, the political leadership more than ever needs and competes for the military support.¹¹⁸ The Party-military relationship has become a two-way street, with the leadership trying to establish control over the military and gain the military's support, while the military in return vies for influence over the policy-making process.

Conclusion

This chapter put forth the reliance-control model in order to explain the PLA's political influence, generated through the Party-military framework. The reliance-control model posits, first, that the political and power relationship between the top leader and the PLA largely determines the level of policy influence the PLA can exert. Second, this relationship varies on the basis of the top leader's political reliance on the PLA for political support and the top leader's ability to establish effective control over the PLA.

Under the reliance-control model, the top leader's *political reliance* on the PLA serves as the basic condition for the level of the PLA's influence in policies. In order for the top leader to grant the military influence, he must be assured that during times of need – intraparty struggles, political jockeying to consolidate and sustain his political power, and large-scale social upheavals – he can rely on the military's allegiance and political support. Political reliance is the first and foremost necessary condition for such Party-military bargaining to occur.

The extent to which the top leader is able to establish *effective control* over the PLA during his tenure is the second condition that helps determine the access the top leader provides the PLA with, and hence the level of influence the PLA exerts in policies.

As the PLA and the State/government continue to “professionalize” and “specialize,” power will inevitably continue to decentralize, which will in turn lead to the Party’s further fragmentation. In the post-Deng era, the top leaders do not have the same deep and organic bonds with the PLA that Mao and Deng had. As a result, these leaders face far more difficulties establishing authority and effective control over the PLA.

The top leader’s relationship with the PLA is exclusive relative to other political leaders. However, the political interference of previous CMC chairman (or chairmen), or from the former top leader(s), supported and sustained by tenacious groups within the PLA whose interests and privileges hinge on such lingering influence, created further difficulties for the new top leader to establish effective control. Unless the top leader establishes effective control, the PLA listens to other master(s), which in Chinese politics constitutes the most serious political danger to the top leader. Without effective control over the PLA, the Party would begin fragmenting, making the top leader vulnerable to a host of serious political challenges. Therefore, this tug of war for control and influence emerges as leaders seek to control soldiers in order to serve their political needs, while soldiers seek access and influence, as well as the realization of their institutional interests.

This chapter then reviewed the historic relations between the PLA and the Party in order to explain the unique significance of the PLA to the CCP as well as the power arrangement in the trinity – the Party, the PLA, and the State (The Party’s formal power structure and the PLA’s political representation are explained in detail in Appendix A). The CCP has maintained the goal of essentially building a State army, as, according to China’s first and current constitutions the National People’s Congress (NPC) is endowed with ultimate authority over the PLA. In reality, however, since the founding of the PRC

in 1949 the idea of subjugating the PLA to the NPC and the government has remained the ideal but has not been achieved. As a result, the Ministry of Defense, the only organ under the State Council that links to the PLA, is not part of the command and control chain and remains a hollow shell.

Thus, the PLA and the government have no meaningful direct links. Additionally, the PLA is not subordinate to the State, which is a deliberate institutional design that the Party engineered. The PLA and the government realize their interactions mostly through their participation in the Party's power mechanism and platforms that the Party controls (traditionally, leading small groups or LSGs). The PLA has no real obligation to report to either the NPC or the government. This organic separation between the military and the government sets the stage for the difficulty of coordination and cooperation between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system on China's foreign and security policy-making process.

¹ The "Party leader" was hard to define in the early 1980s, as different people occupied the three supreme "hats" (President, Party General Secretary, and the CMC Chairman). This situation arose deliberately, due to Deng's criticism of Hua Guofeng for concentrating too much power in himself. Deng remained the CMC Chairman until 1989, while over this period Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang served as the Party General Secretary. Li Xiannian and then Yang Shangkun served as President consecutively during this period. It was further difficult to define who the "Party leader" was during this period because there were a number of second tier leaders, "the elders," who had crucial influence on policy-making, even without formal positions in the government and military. It wasn't until 1992 that the three supreme "hats," for the first time since 1980, were held by one person – Jiang Zemin. The following Party leaders, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, have maintained this concentration of power.

² Yu Keping "Sixty Years of Political Development," in Kenneth Lieberthal (ed.), *China's Political Development: Chinese and American Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), pp. 52-3.

³ For example, the PLA's support for Deng Xiaoping's policy of shifting China's focus from class struggles to economic development inevitably led to drastic cuts in the defense budget in real terms and the deterioration of the military's army-building effort, armament modernization, and well-being. Therefore, by yielding to Deng's decision the PLA compromised its political autonomy, and it eventually suppressed the PLA's military autonomy.

⁴ An excellent analysis of this point can be found in David Shambaugh, "Civil-Military Relations in China: Party-Army or National Army?" *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 16 (2002), pp. 12-3.

⁵ The PLA's corporate interest, independent of and separate from the Party, was clearly evidenced by its ultimate resistance against the power seizure campaign Mao Zedong launched in 1967-68. Other cases

include Peng Dehuai's challenge to Mao's Great Leap Forward movement at the 1959 Lushan Meeting. These cases, however, have been disputed and explained by alternate theories such as factional struggles and disunity within the PLA.

⁶ Michael Kiselycznyk and Phillip C. Saunders, "Civil-Military Relations in China: Assessing the PLA's Role in Elite Politics," p. 7.

⁷ The government (state), the military, and society all play a role in China's foreign and security policy-making process. In the past, society's role was much less notable, but it has become increasingly important beginning in the 2000s.

⁸ For example, see Kjeld Eric Brodsgaard and Zheng Yongnian (eds.), *Bringing the Party Back In: How China is Governed*, (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004).

⁹ Notable cases include Deng Xiaoping's decision to fight the 1979 Sino-Vietnam War and Mao's decision to enter the Korean War in 1950. Deng's decision to fight Vietnam met opposition from the PLA but was supported by the MFA. This was explained in great detail in this dissertation's first case study. With regard to China's decision to enter the Korean War, professional soldiers such as Lin Biao resisted the decision to go to war. Nie Rongzhen, then Chief of Joint Staff, reminisced in his memoir, "Lin Biao opposed (China) sending troops to Korea." Peng Dehuai's biography, compiled mostly by Peng's secretaries and staff, also confirm this point. It explains that Mao planned to send Lin Biao to lead the troops into the Korean Peninsula, but the Secretariat had to change the commander to Peng Dehuai because Lin was not supportive of China entering the war. On September 6, 1950, Lin maintained his opposition to entering the Korean War and raised a proposal in the CMC meeting that China should, "send out troops but not getting engaged in warfighting," a proposal that Zhou Enlai shot down. See Nie Rongzhen, *Memoir of Nie Rongzhen* (Beijing: *jiefangjun chubanshe*, 1982), p. 586; Wang Yan (ed.), *Biography of Peng Dehuai* (Beijing: *dangdai zhongguo chubanshe*, 1993), p. 400; Lei Yingfu, "Memorizing Several Major Decisions Related to the War of Resisting U.S. Aggression and Aiding North Korea," *dang de wen xian*, 1 (1994), p. 27.

¹⁰ The study chose 1978 as the starting point because it is a highly symbolic year in PRC's history. It is a year of China's political, economic, and societal rebirth. In 1978, China adopted a series of groundbreaking policies, including officially shifting its path to economic reform and modernization. In 1978, China restarted the university entrance exam after it was suspended for 11 years. Over 270,000 new students, aged 16 to 40, entered universities upon being selected based on this equal competition. 1978 is also the year of China's ideological emancipation and the start of liberalization – restrictions on numerous banned movies, traditional Chinese culture, and Western literature were removed. The rectification movement also started to gain momentum in 1978 under Hu Yaobang's leadership, as he pushed to "redress unjust and erroneous cases" (*pingfan yuanjia cuo'an*) from past political campaigns. Between 1978 and 1980, the names of 2.9 million Chinese were cleared as part of this rectification movement. By 1984, 547,000 "rightists" were rectified, 125,000 "right-opportunists" were rectified, and 850,000 Chinese who were sent to the countryside were allowed back into the cities. Since 1978, the fate of hundreds of millions of Chinese has been drastically changed. See He Zai, *How Unjust and Erroneous Cases Were Rectified* (Beijing: *zhonggong zhuangyang dangxiao chubanshe*, 1999), p. 3.

¹¹ I define Deng's era as the time between 1978 and 1989. Deng stepped down from his last official post, that of the CMC Chairman, in November 1989. His political influence lingered until 1994, rather than until his death in 1997, because he made his final known policy intervention in October 1993, and reinforced it through his last public appearance in February 1994. Deng's last policy intervention was to scrap the economic austerity plans that Zhu Rongji had put in place, as Deng believed that "slow growth is not socialism." See Maurice Meisner, *The Deng Xiaoping Era: An Inquiry Into the Fate of Chinese Socialism, 1978-1994* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), pp. 484-5.

¹² This was evidenced by Yang Side's explanation of Deng Xiaoping's role: "Deng Xiaoping only gives big directions, but does not handle specifics." See Pei Gaocai, "Secret Envoy Who Set the Stage for the Wang-Koo Meeting", *dangzheng luntan ganbu wenzhai* (Party & Government Forum), 10 (2013); Decisions such as sending the 981 ship to disputed waters in the South China Sea, protected by the PLA Navy, in 2014, belong to such a class of policies that are too detailed to fall into the top leader's portfolio, despite its bearing on Sino-U.S. relations.

¹³ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, p. 227.

¹⁴ At least two senior officers proposed the use of force to take down the Gang of Four. General Xiao Jinguang proposed this idea directly to Marshal Ye Jianying when Mao was seriously ill, an idea dismissed

by Ye because of “bad timing.” See Xiao Jinguang’s Memoir, extended version, (Beijing: PLA Press, 1984), pp. 351-2. Li Jijun, another senior PLA officer, separately proposed this action to General Song Shilun, President of the Academy of Military Sciences, in 1976. Some Chinese media reports attributed this proposal to Song Shilun, citing Song as stating, “we have to use armed remonstrance in helpless circumstances.” See Wu Dongfeng, “Profile of General Song Shilun,” *Beijing Daily*, October 8, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/theory/2007-10/08/content_6842772.htm; However, according to the author’s interviews, it was Li Jijun’s idea, which he proposed to Song Shilun. Song and others ruled this out, but Song appreciated Li’s courage and assisted Li’s promotion later on. Li was promoted in the 1980s to assist and lead substantial reforms to the military system, during which his bold vision for turning the CMC into a full-fledged decision-making body with independent research and certain implementation capabilities faced strong resistance and pushback from General Departments. Yang Shangkun put Li on the path to take over the position of General Secretary of CMC after Yang retired, and his half brother took over the Vice Chairmanship of the CMC. However, Deng disrupted this plan in 1992. Li therefore became collateral damage of the Yang brothers’ political downfall in 1992. The above conclusion was based on interviews the author conducted with former CMC and AMS officers who worked closely under Li Jijun.

¹⁵ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

¹⁶ Interview with a former CMC officer, Beijing, summer of 2013; Interview with a veteran officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁷ In the 1980s, the CCP Consultative Committee, represented by eight first-generation leaders including Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Ye Jianying, Bo Yibo, and Li Xiannian, acted as arbiters of policy debates.

¹⁸ The institutional reforms Deng pushed in the early 1980s, which included the institutionalized retirement of cadres at and below the provincial governor and minister levels, the selection of younger and more educated cadres, and the separation of the Party from the government, were largely successful. However, as economic reform and opening up significantly transformed Chinese society and its economy, intra-Party conflicts continuously intensified. Deng’s reforms were stuck between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, economic modernization and reforms had to ruthlessly be pushed through in order not to be reversed; on the other hand, the socialist system and its essential tenets such as rule by the CCP had to be maintained. The power struggles and frictions between the conservative camp, led by Chen Yun, and the reformists, led by Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Hu Qili, Yan Mingfu, Rui Xingwen and Zhu Muzhi, heated up and led to a serious rift within the Party. This finally led to the collapse of the Deng-Hu-Zhao mechanism, as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang were ousted from the government. See Kou Chien-wen, *The Evolution of Chinese Elite Politics: Institutionalization and Power Transition, 1978-2004, (Second Edition)* (Taipei: Wunan, 2005), pp. 119-31.

¹⁹ The weakening of Deng Xiaoping’s political power, especially after 1989, was evidenced both by the conservative camp’s control of the Party’s propaganda and cadre/personnel systems, and by the main policies immediately after 1989, both of which – economic policies of rectification and readjustment and a political policy of anti-capitalist liberalization – Deng opposed. Chen Yun led the conservative camp, which also included Li Peng, Yao Yilin, Song Ping, Wang Renzhi, Xu Weicheng, Gao Di, and He Jingzhi. See Kou Chien-wen, *The Evolution of Chinese Elite Politics*, pp. 136-42; Yan Jiaqi, “The Nature of Chinese Authoritarianism,” in Carol Lee Hamrin and Suisheng Zhao (eds.), *Decision-making in Deng’s China: Perspectives from Insiders* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); Han Wenfu, *Deng Xiaoping Biography: Governance* (Taipei: shi bao wenhua chubun gongsi, 1993), pp. 832-9.

²⁰ Examples for the last category include political decisions such as the arrests of Bo Xilai and Zhou Yongkang. These cases do not directly concern the military’s interest, but the military’s support is important, as the PLA is seen as a required participant in Party politics. The PLA normally would publicly voice its support in order to demonstrate allegiance to the leader after these incidents. An interview by the author with a senior official from the Propaganda Department indicated that the top-level propaganda officials and in the military the top GPD officers sanction such public demonstrations of support and allegiance, but they are usually initiated by these individuals and agencies. Occasionally, propaganda officials and the GPD would ask these selected agencies to voice their support for certain policies. However, the chiefs of these agencies have certain autonomy in whether and how they speak. For example, regarding Zhou Yongkang’s case, the PLA responded with firm support, first demonstrating the PLA’s and the People’s Armed Police’s support (PAP) through the *PLA Daily*’s weibo (Chinese equivalent of Twitter) account and then publishing an article, implying their support for the further and deeper implementation of

the anti-corruption campaign, if that is what Xi Jinping desired. However, Commander Wang Jianping and Political Commissar Xu Yaoyuan of the PAP, which was well-known to be Zhou's support base, never voiced public support individually or separately as the PAP, either because they were unwilling to or they were not allowed to do so. Then, in December 2014, both Wang and Xu were replaced at the same time. The other example is the PLA's response to Bo Xilai's case. Bo was arrested in April 2012. The *PLA Daily* published articles in the weeks following Bo's arrest, advocating the PLA "not to be swayed by the hideous current" and "ensure the authority of the Party Center, CMC and Chairman Hu." However, it wasn't till June 2013 that General Zhang Haiyang, Zhang Zhen's son and Political Commissar of the Second Artillery who had close ties with Bo, published his article, promising to "self-consciously safeguarding Chairman Xi's authority." See "Who Else Is Beyond Touch if Big Tigers Like Zhou Yongkang and Xu Caihou Taken Down," *PLA Daily*, December 17, 2014; "PLA Top Reshuffled, Commander and Political Commissar of PAP Replaced," *Pengpai News* (The Paper), December 26, 2014.

²¹ In the non-military world, only those officials at the administrative status of Vice Provincial Governor and above are eligible for alternate membership of the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC); In order to turn any proposal into a resolution, and therefore an official policy of the Party, it has to be passed by the CCPCC, which is on average composed of 200-300 members who serve a five-year term. The CCPCC members include the PBSC members, "three deputies and two supremes," (or 两副一高, which means Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC, Vice Premier, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, President of the Supreme People's Court), the PLA CMC members, principals of provinces and autonomous regions as well as agencies and departments directly administered by the CCPCC, principals of military regions, and all services and offices directly administered by the PLA CMC. The CCPCC is regarded as the collective leadership of the Party and represents the Party to the outside.

²² Michael D. Swaine concluded in his 1992 study on the military and political succession that in China's political system, "a party leader's ultimate power relies to a great extent upon the strength and breadth of his personal links to the military, whereas a military leader's ultimate political leverage usually derives from his personal relationships with key party leaders." See Swaine, *Military and Political Succession in China*, pp. 5-172.

²³ Since the 1980s, collective political leadership and decision-making based on consensus have been emphasized and institutionalized. However, this development of an intra-Party mechanism of checks and balances has not fundamentally changed the personalized nature of the relationship between the Party leader and the PLA. This is due to the unique interdependent relationship between the military and the top political leader, as well as the relative autonomy and separateness of military affairs in China.

²⁴ Although the People's Armed Police (PAP) is put under the PLA system and answers to the CMC, the PAP is not composed of PLA combat troops. Second, even the PLA thinks of Tibet and Xinjiang in strategic terms of protecting China's national security and unity. There is a pervasive thought in China that separatism could create a domino effect – if one piece falls off (Tibet or Xinjiang), other pieces would follow.

²⁵ Zhu De proposed in 1949 to build the PLA into an Army of National Defense (*guofangjun*). The essence of the concept of building an Army of National Defense is to build a State army, thereby leaving the military in the hands of the government instead of the Party. In this sense, the CCP could still exert control through the CCP members and Party organs in the PLA, but could not enforce the decision-making and command-and-control by law. Zhu De was an enthusiastic supporter of the Common Program of the 1949 Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which stipulated that the PLA receives command and control from the government. In this conference, Zhu De made a statement about the mission for the "people's army" without mentioning the CCP or the importance of the CCP's absolute control over the military. Zhu stated: "The Common Program requires the people's army to continue to be strengthened militarily and politically, strengthening a modern army, building the Air Force and the Navy, and instructing the commanders and fighters with revolutionary education. I assure to all of you today: we must do so resolutely and we must build a unified, modern and powerful people's army, which firmly serves the people. Only such a military could sufficiently and effectively protect our great country and people." See *ren min ri bao*, September 25, 1949; Liu Guoxin, "Analysis of Zhu De's National Security Thinking in Early Days of PRC," *website of the Institute of Contemporary China Studies*, January 1, 2008, available at: <http://www.iccs.cn/contents/299/8020.html>; Gu Zexu, *Alternative Biography of Zhu De: Past Kindness and*

Grudge with Mao Zedong (tian xing jian, 2010). Peng Dehuai criticized the Soldier's Oath during an inspection of troops in November 1956. The Soldier's Oath starts by saying, "Under the leader of Chairman Mao, we..." Peng commented on the spot, "the way (the Soldier's Oath was) written is problematic. The military now belongs to the State. How can we say it is under the leadership of somebody? We are all materialists. If Chairman Mao dies, who will lead (the military)? This has to be changed." See Liu Tong, "Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai Before and After Lushan Conference," *wen shi can kao*, 16 (2011), available at: http://tuku.club.china.com/data/thread/1015/2738/34/55/4_1.html.

²⁶ You Ji, "Jiang Zemin's Command of the military," p. 132.

²⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, (Beijing: *renmin chubanshe*, 1952).

²⁸ Both Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang understood this taboo. When visiting Australia, Hu slipped and told the press that China planned to cut one million PLA personnel, which Deng had not yet announced. Deng was displeased with Hu's mistake and thought Hu jumped the gun. Deng also believed that Hu's interview with an overseas journalist, Lu Qiang, revealed his ambition to join the military leadership, which was one of the reasons why Deng unseated Hu. The above views are based on the author's interview with a former interpreter for Deng, Beijing, summer of 2013. Another one of Deng's interpreters, who served during the 1980s confirmed this point, pointing out that Zhao was once warned by Deng's office for making too many visits to military regions. Deng was serious about transferring control of the military to Zhao in 1987 and urged the military leadership to assist Zhao. That led to Zhao's deeper involvement in military affairs in 1988, until the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, when Zhao was disgraced and deposed by Deng.

²⁹ The PLA has to participate in Party affairs through its representation in the Party congresses, Central Commission, and the Politburo. However, the Party has relatively fewer tools to manage and supervise the military, with the CMC chairman serving as the exception, who has been most of the time, though not always, the top leader of the Party.

³⁰ Interview with a former interpreter of Deng Xiaoping, Beijing, summer of 2013.

³¹ Michael D. Swaine analyzed the "highly personalized and ambiguous power relationships existing within the system of military command and control and party supervision over the PLA." Swaine concluded, "political authority in China remains highly personalized, militarized, and contentious," and a military leader's political power depends upon his personal influence with key Party leaders. Swaine, *Military and Political Succession in China*, pp. 3-21.

³² This practice is often called "Jiang following Deng's rule" (*Deng gui Jiang sui*), which means that the precedents set by one's predecessors often carry with them legitimacy.

³³ Huang Limin, "Research and Analysis of Composition of Central Military Commission after CCP 10th National Congress," *Dang Shi Bo Cai*, 10 (2010), available at: http://www.21ccom.net/articles/ljsd/lccz/article_2010090818040.html.

³⁴ The concentration of all formal titles – CMC Chairman, Chairman of the Party, and Premier – in Hua's hands was later used as ammunition to attack Hua. Therefore, as Hua gave up all his titles, it would have been difficult to hand these titles again to one person.

³⁵ Article 21, "CCP Constitution produced by the 12th National Congress of the CCP," *People's Daily*, September 6, 1982, available at: <http://www.71.cn/2013/0705/721723.shtml>.

³⁶ From 1977 to 2012, the Party's constitution was revised eight times (1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2012). See Zhou Shuangmei, "Historic evolution of CCP leading institutions," *Dang Shi Zong Lan*, 10 (2007), available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64172/85037/85040/6457845.html>.

³⁷ The 1987 Party Constitution did not insist on the 1982 stipulation and therefore Deng headed the CMC as an ordinary CCP member, without any position in the Party.

³⁸ Deng nominated all major posts on the CMC in November 1989. Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 575-6.

³⁹ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 576.

⁴⁰ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 579.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² In ranking, the CMC vice chairman who runs the CMC's routine operations is usually a step up from the other vice chairmen.

⁴³ In one of the author's interviews, it was alleged that at the end of the 1980s, Zhang's wife accepted a favor from a GSD officer (also from Shandong, Zhang's home province) when doing interior decorating at his house. The bribe was worth millions of yuan, and was used not only for interior decoration but also to

purchase all the imported appliances. This officer later reported the bribe to Jiang in 1995-96. Jiang chose not to discipline Zhang but just to talk to him. After this episode, Zhang was “pocketed” by Jiang and became his trusted general. From then on, Zhang became the “core supporter of Jiang in the military,” said a retired PLA officer, also from Shandong Province, who knew the officer who reported Zhang for bribery. Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011. You Ji also mentioned this in an article, positing there was a corruption allegation against Zhang Wannian in 1996. See reference 10 in You Ji, “Jiang Zemin’s command of the military.”

⁴⁴ Interviews with several active-duty and retired senior PLA officers, Beijing, Guangzhou, Jilin and Changsha, 2010-2014.

⁴⁵ This practice has not just been carried on in the military realm.

⁴⁶ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

⁴⁷ Interview with a senior PLA officer, summer of 2014.

⁴⁸ Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Betts separated military influence into two forms: direct influence that flows from “formal and explicit recommendations”; and indirect influence that flows from “ways in which the soldiers may control the premises of civilian decision through monopoly of information or control of options.” Ibid.

⁵⁰ Gu Shanqing, Yu Yongbo, and Xu Caihou all came from Wafangdian, near Dalian, Liaoning Province. Gu was promoted to Lieutenant General in 1990 and General in 1992, while Yu was Deputy Director of GPD in 1989 and Director of GPD from 1992-2002.

⁵¹ Once of the most contentious aspects of Hu’s reform efforts was his attempt to further “civilianize” officers who perform civilian duties in the PLA, thereby reducing the number of PLA personnel and better utilizing the defense budget. There are more than 100,000 officers who function in science and technology research, education, medical care, military journalism, and sports/entertainment. It has been a long battle to attempt to separate these activities from the PLA. Deng Xiaoping, as early as March 1980, advocated turning these officers into un-uniformed civilian officers. As part of the military reforms launched in 1988, more than 100,000 officers were to be turned into civilian staff and removed from the military. However, officers performing non-combat duties strongly resisted this proposal. As a compromise, these officers were allowed to keep their military status but could not advance through the military ranks. Instead, they would enjoy the advancement in degrees of “technology” and associated privileges. This 1988 reform was partially reversed in 1992, when the Official Regulation on Military Civilian Cadres was passed, which allowed the 100,000 civilians officers to regain their military uniform and military status. From then on, those civilian officers who had previously been military officers have been able to keep their military status and uniforms, while those civilian officers who were recruited after 1992 no longer have military status. This military reform Hu tried to push through was strongly resisted. By October 2008, the PLA had recruited 20,000 civilian staff who do not enjoy military status. However, the more than 100,000 civilian officers who remained in the PLA continued to wear their military uniform and enjoy military status during Hu’s period. See “Chinese Military Recruited Nearly 20,000 Civilian Staff This Year,” *PLA Daily*, November 17, 2008, available at: <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2008-11-17/0704530468.htm>; Liu Zhiyi and Song Yuhang, “Direction of Reform of Civilian Officers: Non-Active Duty,” *Southern Weekend*, 0February 21, 2014, available at: <http://www.infzm.com/content/98228>.

⁵² The General Office of the CCPCC drafted the military reform plan under Hu’s instructions. However, the PLA leadership, headed by Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, the two CMC Vice Chairmen appointed by Jiang, resisted the plan. The author’s interviews were unable to uncover details of the reform plan. Multiple interviews in Beijing and the military regions conducted by the author indicated that the reform plan had the opposite effect of its intended consequences, because of manipulation by Xu and Guo.

⁵³ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013; interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2014.

⁵⁴ The Commanders of the Beijing Military Region (BMR) include Qin Jiwei (1980-7), Zhou Yibing (1987-90), Wang Chengbin (1990-3), Li Laizhu (1993-7), Li Xinliang (1997-2002), Zhu Qi (2002-7), and Fang Fenghui (2007-12). The BMR’s Political Commissars included Yuang Shengping (1980-2), Fu Chongbi (1982-5), Yang Baibing (1985-7), Liu Zhenhua (1987-90), Zhang Gong (1990-2), Gu Shanqing (1990-6), Du Tiehuan (1996-2003), Fu Tinggui (2003-9), and Liu Fulian (2009-). Among them, Qin Jiwei and Zhou Yibing were close to Deng Xiaoping. Qin became Defense Minister in 1987, while Zhou fought the Huaihai Campaign under Deng’s leadership and was Chief of Staff of the BMR, where he directed the

1981 military exercise, which was a hallmark campaign under Deng to revive the PLA's morale. Allegedly, Gu Shanqing was close to Jiang Zemin through Yu Yongbo, and Zhu Qi was close to Hu. Hu served as governor first in Guizhou and then in Tibet from 1985 to 1992, which were both regions covered by the Chengdu Military Region, where Zhu Qi served.

⁵⁵ Gao Hua, *How Did The Red Sun Rise: The Cause and Effect of the Rectification Movement in Yan'an*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2000), p. 13.

⁵⁶ In September 1927, following the Autumn Harvest Uprising, Mao Zedong renamed his forces the "Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army." In December 1927, the CCP forces were again renamed, this time as the "Workers' and Peasants Red Army" or "Red Army," in following the Soviet Red Army's model. In August 1937, the main force of the Red Army was renamed the Eighth Route Army, based on an anti-Japanese agreement the CCP and KMT reached. Zhu De remained commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army. The Eighth Route Army was also known as the 18th Army Group of the National Revolutionary Army of the Republic of China. Two months later, those from the Red Army who engaged in guerrilla warfare in eight provinces against Japanese invasion troops were renamed the New Fourth Army of the National Revolutionary Army of the ROC. In October 1945, the First Field Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was founded on the basis of the troops of the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Military Area Command of the Eighth Route Army. Since then, the PLA has been the formal name that the CCP uses for its military force.

⁵⁷ Gao Hua, *How Did The Red Sun Rise*, p. 82.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Although the Gutian Meeting established the principle of "the Party commanding the gun," the dispute before this meeting was caused partly by Mao's disobeying the Party Center's order. The Gutian Meeting in 1929 was the result of a 20-month-long debate between Mao and Zhu De. The Fourth Red Army, led by Zhu and Mao, was mainly a combination of troops Zhu De led after the Nanchang Uprising (Regiment 28) and those Mao led after Autumn Harvest uprising (Regiment 31). Regiment 28 was composed mainly of officers who graduated from the Huangpu Military Academy and experienced soldiers of the so-called Iron Army who went through beifa. Regiment 31 was mainly composed of untrained soldiers who were peasants. Regiment 28 had a weak system of Party representatives, while Regiment 31 enforced political indoctrination and established Party representatives at the platoon level. Regiment 31 looked down upon Regiment 28 for its lack of official military training, while Mao disagreed with Zhu's practice of overly democratic decision-making in the Fourth Red Army. The Fourth Red Army had three Party organizations: the Front Commission of Hunan, the Special Commission of Hunan and Jiangxi, and the Military Commission of the Fourth Red Army. The Party Center instructed in 1928 that the Military Commission should be established, with Zhu De as its Secretary. In February 1929, the Party Center (CCP Politburo), led by Zhou Enlai, wrote to the Fourth Red Army to instruct Mao and Zhu to leave the Army and come to work in Shanghai. In the same order, Zhu and Mao were asked to divide the Fourth Red Army. Mao wrote back and rejected this order. This intensified the frictions between Zhu and Mao. Meanwhile, the Party Center sent Liu Angong to inspect the Fourth Red Army and appointed him Secretary of Military Commission and Director of Political Work Department. Liu sided with Zhu in the dispute between Mao and Zhu. Liu criticized Mao's violation of the Party Center's direct orders and advocated that military officers should make decisions without an overpowering Party representative, i.e. Mao. Mao was then sidelined. At the following 7th Congress of the Fourth Red Army, Mao was stripped of his position as Secretary of the Front Commission through democratic elections, and Chen Yi was elected to replace Mao. Mao said, "my power came from the grassroots level. My power came from the people. My power came from soldiers, from below. However, this time I was unseated by the (soldiers) below." Mao then left the Fourth Red Army. The Politburo made a decision to reinstate Mao and implement Mao's ideas in September 1929. The 9th Congress of the Fourth Red Army, better known as the Gutian Meeting, was held in December 1929. In this meeting, the principle that decision-making power of the Red Army needs to be concentrated in the hands of political commissars at each level was established. The Gutian Meeting was a key step for the establishment of the Red Army's political commissar system. After this meeting, political commissars have become the CCP's open representatives in the Red Army, with the responsibility to supervise military commanders and troops, implement all orders of the superiors, and consolidate the Party's control over the Red Army. Since then, all orders, instructions, and reports to superior officers by military commanders had to be co-signed or co-issued by political commissars. Otherwise, the superior

officers would not recognize such orders and the officers and soldiers at the lower level would not implement these orders. Dou Chunfang and Miao Tijun, "Differences of Mao Zedong and Zhu De Before Gutian Meeting," *hong guang jiao zazhi*, reprinted by the CCP News Net, June 21, 2013, available at: <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/n/2013/0621/c85037-21921051.html>; Zhang Yong, "Dispute Between Zhu and Mao In 1929 and Evolution of Power Structure In The Red Army," *jin dai shi yan jiu*, 5 (2013), available at: <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/72270-2.html>; Gong Chu, *Memoir of General Gong Chu (ming bao yue kan she*, 1978); Xiao Ke, *Memory about Zhu-Mao Red Army on the Sideline* (Beijing: zhong gong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1993).

⁶⁰ Disagreements regarding the Party's dominance in the Red Army persisted through the 1920s and 1930s, encapsulated in the Zhu-Mao debate. Zhu De, the top professional soldier, headed the Military Committee of the Fourth Red Army, while Mao Zedong, then Party Representative, headed the so-called Frontline Committee (FC). Zhu and Mao had disputes over who should have the final say in military affairs between the 7th Congress in June 1929 and the 9th Congress of the Fourth Red Army, primarily because of the fight between the military officers and the imposed political officers who they believed messed up their military affairs. Mao was voted out as General Secretary of the FC. This dispute ended with the Gutian Meeting in December 1929, which firmly established Mao's leadership of the Fourth Red Army. Guo Hongjun, *Superstar Shining* (Beijing: zhong yang wen xian chu ban she, 2008).

⁶¹ Gao Hua, *How Did The Red Sun Rise*, p. 77.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ This three-member leadership team differed significantly from previous ones, as the CCP's supreme leader, Zhang Wentian, was not included.

⁶⁴ No historians seem to be able to explain this reversal of power between Zhou and Mao. But it is likely that Mao's military strategy was working, which saved the Red Army at a crucial moment. Also, if put in the context of the longer history between Mao and Zhou, one could conclude that Mao was indeed a talented military strategist with stronger character who was good at manipulating people and political maneuvering. Zhou, in comparison, played an assistant role throughout his career, alongside Mao.

⁶⁵ After the Fifth Encirclement, led by Chiang Kai-shek with 500,000 troops in 1933-5, significantly weakened the Red Army, the Red Army finally adopted Mao's highly flexible mobile war method in 1935, quickly moving among and between the Kuomintang's stationary troops. The Red Army crossed the Chishui River four times and wiped out two divisions and eight detachments of the Kuomintang troops. It entered into Yunnan Province, crossed the Jinsha River, and skillfully intercepted a few hundred thousand Kuomintang troops. Many officers in the Red Army, including Lin Biao, questioned Mao's strategy at the time. Mao's strategy played a key role in the Red Army's success.

⁶⁶ For example, after 1935, Mao's people controlled all secret communications with Moscow.

⁶⁷ After the 1935 Zunyi Meeting, Mao Zedong was invited to return to the core military leadership, but at a position subordinate to Zhou Enlai, who then represented the Party in the military. As Mao's military strategy achieved successes on the ground, Mao was elevated to the top position in the three-member military leadership, above Zhou Enlai. Zhou, still the official Party representative in the military, became subordinate to Mao. Ironically, after Mao finally became the Party's designated top representative in the Red Army in 1937, Zhou Enlai, as well as Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, the latter two who were professional soldiers, started to contradict Mao in terms of the Red Army's strategy for fighting the Japanese. Mao advocated using guerrilla warfare in mountainous regions and preserving and expanding the Red Army as much as possible, rather than striking the Japanese with frontal assaults. Mao emphasized preserving and strengthening the Red Army, rather than expending it on the struggle with the Japanese. The army led by Lin Biao ignored Mao's instructions but achieved a great military success in the Pingxingguan Battle. Xiang Ying, head of then New Fourth Army and one of Mao's rivals, chose to follow Wang Ming and Zhou Enlai. In the end, Mao's approach proved to be the better one, and even the army ultimately followed Mao's strategy. This instance in 1937, along with the events in 1935, demonstrated that the Party did not always command the gun, even under a figure as dominant as Mao. One could argue against the above analysis by asserting that what was disputed here was mostly military tactics and strategies, and that the disputes herein do not constitute a critical challenge to Mao and his political leadership. In other words, these instances do not constitute a breach of the maxim that the Party always controls the gun. It must be realized, however, that prior to 1949, the concerns of all involved, whether the CCP or the army, were almost exclusively with military tactics and strategy, how to survive physically, and how to fight against

the Nationalist government. Military matters were the central decisions to be made by the Party, and as such the struggle over strategic and tactical approaches was indeed every bit as political as it was military. Historian Gao Hua further elaborates on these points. See Gao Hua, *How Did The Red Sun Rise: The Cause and Effect of the Rectification Movement in Yan'an*, pp. 114 and 213.

⁶⁸ In November 1938, Mao Zedong wrote in *On War and Strategy* (*zhanzheng he zhanlue wenti*): “every communist member should understand this truism: political power comes out of gun barrels.” In the same article, Mao also wrote, “we could say that the whole world could only be transformed with gun barrels,” and “our principle is that the Party commands the guns and never allows guns to command the Party. However, with gun barrels, we could indeed produce a Party...Everything in Yan’an comes out of gun barrels. Everything comes out of gun barrels.” In this article, “gun barrels” mean armed struggles, rather than the military in the narrow sense as framed in the civil-military relationship. In a speech he gave on August 2, 1938, Mao said, “Peasants Association, Workers’ union, political power, and Chinese Communist Party, all come from gun barrels. Everything comes out of gun barrels. This is the truism.” In May 1939, Mao spoke to a regiment of the Eighth Route Army, reiterating, “In China, it is always a tradition that guns dominate everything” (*zhongguo de shi, lilai shi youqiang weida*). See Mao Zedong, “On War and Strategy (November 6, 1938),” in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong: Volume II* (Beijing, *renmin chubanshe*, 1952), pp. 546-7; *Chronicle of Mao Zedong: Volume II*, p. 84.

⁶⁹ Gao Hua, *How Did The Red Sun Rise*, pp. 114-56.

⁷⁰ Li Peng, “Zhu De and Yan’an Rectification Movement,” *Dang Shi Wen Hui*, Issue 2 (2012).

⁷¹ Multiple PLA officers expressed this view. The concept of building a State Army was debated in the 1980s. However, since the Tiananmen Incident, this has generally remained a taboo topic in the PLA.

⁷² The exceptions are the constitutions revised during the Cultural Revolution, which deviated from the 1952 Constitution. The current constitution, the 1982 version, reverted back to the notion of State leadership of the PLA.

⁷³ In the U.S.-China mil-to-mil relationship, the most difficult operational aspect is finding equivalent counterparts for the visiting officers. A former Pacom Officer who handled U.S.-China mil-to-mil interactions complained about the great difficulty of explaining the importance of the visiting CMC vice chairman to his DoD colleagues who did not work on the China desk. In other words, how does General Xu Caihou outrank Defense Minister Gen. Liang Guanglie? On the Chinese side, the GSD FAO, which specializes in handling mil-to-mil relationships China has with other countries, complained bitterly about how the U.S. side “mistreated and humiliated” one of China’s highest-ranking officers, Yu Yongbo, Chief of the GPD, by having chaplain corps of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force host and brief Yu during his 2000 visit to the U.S. Interview with a senior PLA officer at GSD FAO, Beijing, summer of 2012.

⁷⁴ “Summary of the Meeting between Government and the CCP Representative,” *Xinhua Ribao*, October 12, 1945.

⁷⁵ Zhou Enlai, “On Issues of building a State Army,” *Xinhua Ribao*, January 18, 1946 (Text from a speech Zhou delivered on January 16, 1946). Gao Di and Xu Zhijian (eds.), *Grand Dictionary of Works of Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun: Vol. I* (Electronic Version) (*Liaoning renmin chubanshe*, 1991).

⁷⁶ This was part of the Summary of Conversations between the Representatives of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, an umbrella agreement reached in 1946, which was commonly called the “Double 10 Agreement.” However, both sides increased their military activities, thus rendering the agreement irrelevant two weeks later. The Double Ten Agreement was a prelude to China’s Civil War. Wang Zhaoguang, *Political Struggle Between KMT and CCP In 1945-1949 and China’s Future* (*she hui ke xue wen xian chu ban she*, 2010), pp. 227-59.

⁷⁷ Liang Cheng, “Framing and Rectification of General Su Yu,” *bai nian chao*, 8 (1999), available at: http://www.gmw.cn/content/2005-06/29/content_260333.htm; Lin Yunhui, “Zhukov Incident and the Dismissal of Peng Dehuai in Lushan,” *Bai nian chao*, 2 (2004), available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/theory/2009-05/18/content_11392474.htm.

⁷⁸ The full name of the “Common Program” is “Common Program of The Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference,” the content of which was based on “Peaceful Nation Building Program,” which the CCP proposed during the 1946 KMT-CCP negotiations before the Civil War started. It was called the “Common Program” since both the KMT and the CCP endorsed it and agreed to implement it. The

“Common Program” served as an interim Constitution between the founding of the PRC in 1949 and the passing of the first Constitution in 1954.

⁷⁹ Cheng Qian, Sa Zhenbing, Zhang Zhizhong, Fu Zuoyi, Cai Tingkai, Long Yun, and Liu Fei.

⁸⁰ Despite the fact that the CCP is the only political party that holds effective political power at the national level, there are eight so-called “democratic Parties” that have received the CCP’s official blessing to participate in politics through the mechanism of the People’s Political Consultative Conference. These “democratic Parties” are the: Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, China Democratic League, China Democratic National Construction Association, China Association for Promoting Democracy, Chinese Peasants’ and Workers’ Democratic Party, Zhigongdang of China, Jiusan Society, and Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League.

⁸¹ “New democracy” posited that a backward society such as China needs a period of capitalist industrialization before it transitions to socialism. Additionally, such a society would preserve aspects of capitalism and a set of more liberal values, including the protection of individual economic activity in the countryside. Such steps would rejuvenate and develop China’s broken economy, which was battered by decades of war, so that China could realize industrialization as soon as possible. Yang Kuisong, “Why Mao Zedong gave up New Democracy: about the influence of the Russian Model,” *Journal of Modern History*, 4 (1997).

⁸² Liu Zongyao, “Soviet Union, Communist International and China’s general line during the transition”, *Journal of Sichuan Normal Institute*, Issue 2, 1990.

⁸³ Cheng Liansheng, “New study of the Reason for the Premature Termination of New Democratic Society,” *Gansu Social Sciences*, 4 (1994); Huang Jingfang and Wang Jing, “Review and Thinking of the Proposal of Socialist Transformation Ideas,” *Journal of Mao Zedong Thought*, 4 (1990).

⁸⁴ *Complete Biography of Peng Dehuai* (Beijing: zhongguo dabaike quanshu chubanshe, 2009). An article discussing this book, which appeared in *People’s Daily* and the *China News Agency*, explained the dispute between Su Yu and Peng Dehuai in 1958. “Peng Dehuai’s Biography Discussed about the Criticism against Su Yu,” *China News Net*, August 6, 2014, available at: <http://media.china.com.cn/cmays/2014-08-06/262782.html>.

⁸⁵ Peng promoted Huang Kecheng, Su Yu’s deputy, to be General Secretary of the CMC, an effort to deprive Su Yu of his authority. Liang Cheng, “General Su Suffering An Injustice and Rehabilitation,” *bainian chao*, 8 (1999), available at: http://www.xys.org/xys/ebooks/others/history/contemporary/Suyu_mengyuan.txt.

⁸⁶ On April 29, 1958, Marshal Ye Jianying said during a CMC meeting that the MND was the GSD’s supervisor and that the GSD was subordinate to MND – in effect siding with Peng’s position. Ye in the same breath also pointed out that the General Secretary of the CMC was the representative of the CMC Chairman and therefore the GSD had to go through the CMC General Secretary in order to reach the CMC Chairman, a position held by Mao.

⁸⁷ Ding Kaiwen, “The Start, Ending and Analysis of the Luo Ruiqing Incident,” *China News Digest*, Supplement of Issue 958, September 9, 2014, available at: <http://www.cnd.org/CR/ZK14/cr790.gb.html>.

⁸⁸ Several PLA officers interviewed by the author described the MND as “an empty house” (*kong jiaze*), a meagerly-staffed agency, or with “lean legs” (*shou tui*), and an agency with little reach to the grassroots level units, the military regions, or the services, or with “short-legs” (*duan tui*). MND oversees a narrow portfolio of affairs, such as mobilization, veterans affairs, militias who participate in land and maritime border defense, and military diplomacy (with no ultimate authority in policy-making, but handle all implementation).

⁸⁹ This has happened under Chi Haotian (1995-2003) and Cao Gangchuan (2003-7), who held both the position of Defense Minister and the CMC Vice Chairmanship. At other times, defense ministers such as Liang Guanglie or Chang Wanquan were automatically members of the CMC.

⁹⁰ Huang Limin, “Research and Analysis of Composition of Central Military Commission after CCP 10th National Congress.”

⁹¹ Zhou Shuangmei, “Historic Evolution of CCP Leading Institutions,” *Dang Shi Zong Lan*, 10 (2007), available at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64172/85037/85040/6457845.html>.

⁹² Zhang Xi, “Before and After Peng Dehuai’s Appointment to Command the CPV in the War to Resist the U.S. and Aid Korea,” *zhonggong Dnagshi ziliao*, 1989, pp. 119-59.

⁹³ Contemporary Chinese historians are bitterly divided regarding Lin Biao's motivations between 1959 and 1971, especially whether Mao sought out Lin, or Lin enthusiastically volunteered to do the dirty deeds of attacking Peng Dehuai, and to a lesser degree Zhu De, at the 1959 Lushan Meeting. Historians such as Shu Yun and Ding Kaiwen believe that Mao sought out Lin, who acted as Mao's tool despite his personal unwillingness and fear of suffering the same fate as Liu Shaoqi, Mao's previous designated successor. Other historians such as Gao Hua believe in the more orthodox version of Lin's history, which described Lin as a man of great ambition who was greedy for power. See Ding Kaiwen, "Rethinking the Lin Biao Incident: A Discussion with Mr. Gao Hua," *hua xia wen zhai zeng kan*, April 30, 2007, available at: <http://www.cnd.org/CR/ZK07/cr400.gb.html>; Gao Hua, "Mutation and Degeneration of Revolutionary Politics: Reinvestigation of Lin Biao Incident," *er shi yi shi ji*, October 2006 Issue, available at: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/issue/articles/097_0608073.pdf.

⁹⁴ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, p. 195.

⁹⁵ Jonathan D. Spence, *In Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990).

⁹⁶ Ding Kaiwen, *The PLA and the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Mirror Books, 2013), p. 22.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 18-30.

⁹⁸ Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics*, p. 111.

⁹⁹ Lin Biao's diary reveals Mao's anxiety about whether the military would follow him. According to Lin Biao's diary, Mao invited him over for an unusual birthday dinner on December 27, 1964. Mao during the dinner Mao remarked, "What to do if some in the Center wants to seize power and position? What to do if (some) are going to pursue Revisionism? Won't the military follow (him or Liu Shaoqi) on Revisionism?! Politburo, State Council and Secretariat all rejected Mao. But Mao is still Chairman of the Party and the CMC. To force me to rebel, I will turn heaven upside down." See Li De and Shu Yun ed., *Lin Biao's Diary* (Hong Kong, Mirror Books, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ In a September 1967 speech, Mao explicitly made clear that Lin Biao was his chosen successor. Lin's status as Mao's heir apparent was formally written in the Party constitution promulgated during the 9th National Congress of the CCP in 1969.

¹⁰¹ Zhang Yunsheng, *Mao Jiawen Chronicle: Memoir of Lin Biao's Secretary (cun zhen she chu ban gong si*, 1988), p. 227.

¹⁰² Wen Yanqing, *Lin Biao's Loyalty and Revolt: Reinvestigation of the 913 Incident (xin rui wen chuang chu ban*, 2012), p. 130.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ When Mao announced at the 9th CCP National Congress that Liu Shaoqi was dying, Lin Biao and his wife Ye Qun were shocked, as they did not know where Liu was imprisoned. Lin Biao told his daughter Lin Liheng (Lin Doudou), "it does not make sense to take down Liu (Shaoqi) and Deng (Xiaoping), as they were good comrades." This remark is based on Shu Yun's interview with Lin Liheng in 1996. Shu Yun, *Complete Investigation into the Lin Biao Incident (ming jing chu ban she*, 2007); Wen Yanqing, *Lin Biao's Loyalty and Revolt: Reinvestigation of the 913 Incident*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁵ Gao Wenqian, *Wannian Zhou Enlai (The Latter Years of Zhou Enlai)* (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Gao Wenqian's view that Mao compelled Lin Biao's defection was shared by Wang Nianyi, who gave a talk explaining a similar view during a seminar the Institute of Contemporary Chinese History hosted on October 31, 1996. Wang Nianyi was a professor with China's National Defense University and a historian who specialized in studying the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁰⁷ In March 1970, Lin Biao suggested to Mao that he should establish the position of president (*guojia zhuxi*). Mao declined this suggestion, but did not strongly oppose the idea. This was followed by Lin's speech at the Lushan Meeting in August 1971, in which he criticized Zhang Chunqiao, a member of Jiang Qing's camp, for disagreeing on the "genius" theory. Lin's camp, including Wu Faxian and Chen Boda, tried to promote the "genius theory," which argued that Mao transformed Marxism in a "creative," "genius-like" way. Lin used the debate on "genius theory" to strike against the opposing radical camp that Zhang Chunqiao and Jiang Qing led, which he and Wu had serious frictions with. Lin briefed Mao and obtained his approval for his speech against Zhang Chunqiao. However, Mao denied any previous knowledge of Lin's speech. Instead, Mao disgraced Chen Boda and characterized the Military Affairs Commission (*junwei banshizu*, MAC), which Chen headed, as an anti-Party clique. Given Chen and MAC's relationship with Lin Biao, Mao was sending an explicit message that Lin could be next. Ding Kaiwen, *PLA and the*

Cultural Revolution (New York: Mirror Books, 2013), pp. 369-79; Gu Baozi, *Spring and Autumn of Zhongnanhai Personnel* (*zhong gong dang shi chu ban she*, 2009).

¹⁰⁸ Lin Biao's intentions and actual involvement in the coup against Mao has been heavily contested by recent historic research by independent and respected historians such as Shu Yun and Ding Kaiwen. According to this research, based on historic accounts, Lin was most likely misled by his son to get onto the airplane heading for the Soviet Union. Upon hearing the news that Lin Biao's plane crashed, Zhou Enlai wailed, according to the memoirs of both Ji Dengkui, a senior CCP official who was briefing Zhou on-site, and Zhou Bingde, Zhou's niece. This fact is subject to various interpretations, but at least suggests that Lin's innocence or guilt in the Cultural Revolution was a complex issue and that Mao was also probably guilty for the Mao-Lin split. See Shu Yun, *Complete Investigation into the Lin Biao Incident*.

¹⁰⁹ Those news media included *People's Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency*, *Red Flag Magazine*, and *Central Broadcast Station*. Ye Yonglie, *Deng Xiaoping Changed China: Turning Point of China's Future in 1978* (*Sichuan renmin chubanshe and Huaxia chubanshe*, 2014), pp. 37-60.

¹¹⁰ Chi directed the *People's Daily* for 13 months before becoming Deputy Chief of General Staff in 1977. Qin Jiwei, Political Commissar of the Beijing Military Region, allegedly also led these operations. See Chi Haotian, "Taking over People's Daily," *PLA Daily*, November 3, 2008; Ye Yonglie, *Deng Xiaoping Changed China: Turning Point of China's Future in 1978*, pp. 37-60; Yu Huanchun, "People's Daily Once had a Political Commissar," *bai nian chao*, June 13, 2010, available at: http://www.21ccom.net/articles/lsjd/lccz/article_2010061311419.html.

¹¹¹ The military's representation in the CCPCC amounted to more than 50 percent following the 9th Party Congress because of the PLA's role in the "three supports and two military" (*san zhi liang jun*), in which the military took over government offices and State-owned enterprises due to the chaos in society and the collapse of government organizations. See Zhu Mengchang, Zhang Dong and Liu Mingxing, "The CCP's Transformation from A Revolutionary Party to A Ruling Party: Through the Lens of Structural Changes of CCP Central Committee," *zhong gong dang shi yan jiu* (CCP History Studies), 9 (2012), available at: http://old2013.cssn.cn/50/5000/201304/t20130410_340641.shtml.

¹¹² In a memoir, General Zhang Aiping's son recalls, "When drafting the list (of the Politburo), Comrade Xiaoping's opinion was that the number of military members was too high." See Zhang Sheng, "General Zhang Aiping in the Waves of Reform," *tiantian xinbao* (Everyday New News), April 17, 2011, http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguoxiandaishi/detail_2011_04/17/5792521_0.shtml.

¹¹³ The atrocities committed by the PLA took place mostly from 1967-9, when the PLA was ordered to support the Leftists. In 1968, the PLA sent nearly one million soldiers to meet Mao's requirement of supporting the rebels in seizing power nationwide. Since then, the PLA had been put in a rather embarrassing situation. First, it was hard to tell who the "rebels" were and who were not. In reality, the PLA, generally non-radical and supportive of stability, was naturally aligned with the so-called "capitalists," those who were in power and thus enemies of rebels. Therefore, the PLA was either beaten or pressured by both opposing factions, or sided with the enemies of rebels and thus faced attacks by rebels. This plight was further complicated by "Eight Orders of the CMC," which was issued by Lin Biao and sanctioned the violence against "counter-revolutionary organizations or individuals" and prohibited attacks on military facilities. When facing attacks by rebels – mostly unarmed civilians and some armed with seized weapons – the PLA and local militias supported by the PLA responded in some regions by unnecessarily escalating the level of violence and cruelty against a broader civilian population affiliated with rebels. Armed responses by the PLA started first in Xinjiang, which led to the "126 Bloodshed" in January 1967. Guangxi was one of the worst examples of the PLA's atrocities. The PLA, headed by General Wei Guoqing, a close colleague of Deng Xiaoping, was deeply involved in the persecution of the opposing 422 Faction (rebels) who denounced Wei at the start of the Cultural Revolution. Wei stood with the faction of Lian Zhi, which was mostly composed of those from the Military Region of Guangxi. With Huang Yongsheng's approval, Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, and Lin Biao's approval (though Lin's approval was manipulated by Wei's men), Wei's persecution of the 422 Faction resulted in the so-called "422 Atrocity" in August 1968, in which 18,000 civilians were tortured and killed according to the official statistics. In one incident on August 5, 1968, 1,300 captives of the 422 Faction were killed on site by the PLA and the militia supported by the PLA under Wei. The unofficial and unconfirmed statistics believe the number of those killed, or who disappeared or were driven to suicide, is ten times greater than that in the official statistics. Yan Lebin, an official of the Ministry of Public Security who was assigned to

investigate this incident in 1981, wrote that 879,000 civilians were confirmed by name to have been killed during the Cultural Revolution, 30,000 were killed without known names, and more than 20,000 people were disappeared. The atrocities the PLA and local militias committed in Guangxi in 1968 was astounding not only because of the large number of unarmed civilian victims, but also because of the extremely cruel methods used to kill civilians. "Guangxi Cultural Revolution Chronicle of Major Events," *Guangxi renmin chubanshe*, 1990; Yan Lebin, "Remaining Problems of the Cultural Revolution I Handled," *yan huang chun qiu*, 11 (2012), available at: <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/59379.html>; Ding Kaiwen, *The PLA and the Cultural Revolution (ming jing chubanshe, 2013)*, pp. 250-6.

¹¹⁴ Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*; Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen's Memoir: Vol. II*, pp. 400-3.

¹¹⁵ A group of professionally-oriented senior PLA officers opposed the policy of allowing the military to run for-profit businesses. General Zhang Aiping chastised the effect of this policy on the PLA, characterizing it as "self-destructing the Great Wall." In an open letter Zhang wrote to COSTIND in 1984, he stated, "such PLA-run business shall indeed not be something by the CCP's military, but Kuomintang military or warlords...Enthusiasm in making money will inevitably lead to corruption." Zhang also lamented in the CMC meetings, "(allowing) the military and government to run businesses will inevitably lead to officials profiteering, which will inevitably create corruption. Profiteering by those who wear military uniforms are shames for the military and sadness of the nation. Advocating the military to do business and make money is no different from self-destructing the Great Wall." (Author's Note: the Chinese media often likens the PLA to the Great Wall made of steel). Zhang Sheng, *Walking From War*; Ding Dong, "Zhang Aiping Opposed Military Running Business," *liao wang*, Issue 226, December 20, 2013, available at: <http://news.takungpao.com/mainland/outlook/q/2013/1220/2144177.html>.

¹¹⁶ After the 1991 Gulf War, the PLA produced a large volume of research and writings about this war. See Department of Military History Studies of the Academy of Military Sciences, *Complete History of the Gulf War* (Beijing: *jie fang jun chubanshe*, 2000); Zhu Xiaoli and Zhao Xiaozhuo, *RMA of America and Russia (junshi kexue chubanshe*, 1996); Zhu Xiaoli, PhD dissertation "Study of Issues Regarding RMA," Academy of Military Sciences, 1996; Wang Pufeng, *High-tech Warfare (guofang daxue chubanshe*, 1993); Su Zhirong, *New Military Viewpoints across the New Century (junshi kexue chubanshe*, 1998). General Liu Yazhou believed this war demonstrated "the complete failure of the Soviet-style weapons systems and war-fighting theories." Liu believed that the Gulf War signified "the final completion" of the transformation of the U.S. military towards a Revolution of Military Affairs, which started at the end of the Vietnam War. General Liu Yazhou, "The Iraq War Accelerated The New Global Military Reforms," *xuexi yuekan*, 5 (2004); General Liu Yazhou, "Change of Warfare and The PLA's Reform," *jue ce yu xin xi*, 1 (2014), pp. 20-1; "General Liu Yazhou's Conversation with Dai Xu on the Iraq War," January 28, 2006, *Knowfar Institute for Strategic and Defense Studies*, available at: <http://www.defence.org.cn/article-14-60962.html>.

¹¹⁷ General Zhang Qinsheng provides the best analysis of China's strategic doctrine of "active defense." General Zhang points out: the essence of the "active defense" strategy is "being active." "Defense" in this strategy is limited to a strategic posture, a posture of self-defense strategically in order to take more proactive roles in politics and diplomacy. "Being active" is to emphasize war preparation and offensive operations in tactical war-fighting. Therefore, being active in the overall strategy does not limit actual operations to defensive purposes, but to take active offensive actions in the process of strategic defense. Being active also means launching a strategic counter-attack and strategic offense to win the final war and transform its overall defensive posture to offense in order to win the war. General Zhang Qinsheng, "On Strategic Thinking of Active Defense," *xuexi shibao*, July 18, 2011, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2011-07/18/c_121682519.htm.

¹¹⁸ Political leaders' competition for military support mainly occurred between the current top leader and previous top leaders, who often represented different sets of interests.

Chapter Four: Party-Military Relationship as Independent Variable: Cases of Each Post-Mao Leader

Introduction

China's Party-military relationship is the primary reason why the PLA is organically separated from the government in foreign and security policy-making. In the previous chapter, I argued that the PLA's influence on policies through the framework of the Party-military relationship from 1978-2012 hinges on two factors: first and foremost, the top leader's political reliance on the PLA; and second, the top leader's effective control over the PLA. Despite an institutionalized collective political/Party leadership, the relationship between the top leader and the military remains exclusive. Whether the top leader needs the military's political support in politics or policies depends largely on: the stability, multiplicity, and authoritativeness of the leaders' own power bases; the political opposition's coherence and fragmentation within and outside the Party; and the crisis level or stakes. If the political leader is relatively strong, with a more coherent and empowered power base, or his political opposition is relatively weak and vulnerable, he would be in less need of the military's support. The PLA's allegiance, if obtainable, is one of the most formidable pieces of support that any Chinese leader can attain in domestic politics.

The more effective control the top leader exerts over the PLA, the more confident the leader is in wielding the military's influence when necessary to advance his political goals, the more trusting he is in the military, the more access the PLA gains to the top

leader, and the more influence the PLA has in China's policy-making process. Effective control is established for multiple reasons: the PLA more readily identifies with the political leader because of his identity (military experience, seniority, and legitimacy) or because they share the same ideas and objectives. Once effective control is established, the military becomes a strong power base for the leader and naturally gains trust, access, and influence. The top leader tends to include his trusted generals in institutionalized policy-making mechanisms, consult them more closely on policy questions, and even takes on certain policy agendas that the PLA is motivated by. When the top leader fails to establish effective control at the top level of PLA leadership, he will try to shrink the PLA leadership's space, and cultivate layers of officers below the senior leadership with the intention of replacing the generals he distrusts.

Deng Xiaoping's foundation of power rested primarily on Party cadres. Therefore, Deng did not rely on the PLA for political support throughout the entire 1980s, with the exception of 1989 (Tiananmen Incident). While Deng did not have absolute authority over the military, he was able to strongly control the PLA and the PLA did have near total allegiance to him. Deng was in firm control of the PLA's policies and actions throughout the 1980s. Under Deng, the PLA's influence in foreign and security policies was at a nadir.

Jiang Zemin established effective control over the military much more firmly than Hu Jintao did. However, Jiang still had to overcome Deng's political interference to achieve the military leadership's allegiance. In the process, Jiang gave the military leadership more access and supported their cause – to adapt to the challenges presented by the Revolution in Military Affairs, shift the military's strategy to “winning a limited

war under high-tech conditions,” and focus military preparations on reunifying Taiwan with the PRC.

Hu had to contend with even greater political interference from Jiang, and by the end of his tenure had yet to establish effective control over the PLA. Given his distanced relationship with the top military leadership, Hu tried to shrink the PLA’s space in the policy-making process and limit the PLA leadership’s access. Concurrently, Hu tried to shift the emphasis of China’s policy toward Taiwan from one focused on military contingencies to one based on following a legalistic approach and offering economic incentives. The Party-military relationship under Hu was constantly strained, and as a result the PLA tried to push back and exert relative power.

The PLA’s Minimal Influence under Deng¹

As David M. Lampton has pointed out, “Mao and Deng were each legitimated with a distinct mix of ‘traditional’ and ‘charismatic’ authority.”² After 1980, Deng never accepted the formal supreme positions in the Party, and his ranking on the PBSC remained second or third.³ Neither did Deng possess the absolute authority that Mao once commanded, as he alone could not dictate major decisions.⁴ Rather, Deng had to consult with Party elders such as Marshal Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, and Bo Yibo, and make compromises with the Chen Yun Clique, which often disagreed with Deng on economic policies and decisions with ideological implications. Yet Deng, like Mao, was essentially a political strongman. Both were founders of the PRC who gained political legitimacy through decades of war and struggle on the battlefield, and who combined extensive military experience with an expertise in and vision for Party and government work.

Deng's dominance in policy-making throughout the 1980s was second to none. Deng was clearly the deciding factor behind "most really major decisions" and all decisions "must be acceptable to him."⁵ Deng's singular dominance as supreme leader was reaffirmed in 1987 through the Party leadership's announcement during the 1st Plenary of the 13th National Congress of the Party that major policies would be "reported to" and "decided" (*paiban*) by Deng, despite Deng's partial official retirement and therefore his departure from the PBSC.⁶ This resolution was reinforced through an unpublicized resolution passed during the 5th plenary of the 13th National Congress in 1989.⁷

Their deep roots in the military and their bonds with their era's military leaders also distinguished Deng and Mao's relationship with the PLA. Decades of fighting on the battlefield and initiating political campaigns forged, tested, and consolidated such ties. This long process crystallized a mutual understanding between these two leaders and the PLA, and led to the PLA feeling personal loyalty to these leaders. As a result, the PLA leadership's obedience to Deng's strategic judgments was near absolute.

Deng's Political Reliance on the PLA as CMC Chairman (1981-89)

When Deng took power, the PLA was a deeply demoralized and broken military, and thus it needed Deng's leadership to set it back on track much more than Deng needed the PLA. The PLA's deep embroilment in the catastrophic Cultural Revolution sullied its reputation, undermined its effectiveness and readiness, and caused bloodshed in a few provinces.⁸ The 913 Incident further intensified the PLA's negative image and weakened the PLA politically. Because of the military's pervasive influence in society by the end of

the Cultural Revolution, and society's aversion toward the military, the PLA was then derogatively called the "militarist faction,"⁹ and public opinion was overwhelmingly against the PLA.¹⁰ In the 1980s, it became a sensitive subject for the military to speak out independently on politics and foreign policy. The chaos of the 1960s and 1970s, which included the widespread persecution of innocent officers, deeply divided the PLA. By the late 1970s, the military was distracted, broken, and demoralized. It was only after Deng consolidated his political power that the military returned to the path of professionalization and modernization. In a sense, the military needed Deng's leadership much more than Deng needed the military as a power base. Therefore, the military acquiesced to Deng's wishes and receded from the political stage. Furthermore, the PLA's opinions that stood in opposition to Deng's policies were only voiced behind closed doors.

Deng clearly resented the military's intervention in politics during Mao's era.¹¹ Following his political return, Deng unequivocally pushed the PLA to return to the barracks by reducing the political role of military leaders in elite politics and systematically pulling them out of local politics.¹² Deng simultaneously strengthened the government's institutionalization and ability to govern. During Deng's era, the number of military officers on the Politburo and the proportion of uniformed members on the Central Committee were reduced. More importantly, the CMC was put into the hands of cadres with essentially civilian expertise. Geng Biao, who spent 15 years as an ambassador, was called back to run the CMC as Deputy Secretary General (1979-81), and briefly served as the Defense Minister (1981-83). Then, Deng assigned Yang Shangkun, who spent most of his career running the CCPCC General Office and was one

of Deng's close allies, to run the CMC's daily operations (1981-92), first as General Secretary and then as Vice Chairman. Geng and Yang both shielded Deng, allowing him to stand up to the professional soldiers' pressure. For the PLA, which has a long tradition of revering seniority, running the military with essentially civilian officials violated the military's autonomy. Yet the PLA again accepted these changes unconditionally.

As CMC Chairman, Deng had absolute control over the military. With regard to the military, his first priority was downsizing its personnel and reforming its bloated structure. The PLA railway corps, in charge of building and repairing railways, tunnels, and bridges, in both war zones and for civilian use, was first cut in half, from 400,000 in 1970 to 200,000 in 1980, and in 1982-83 its remaining officers were transferred into civilian positions.¹³ The majority of the engineering troops, which totaled 500,000 in 1979, were transferred into civilian positions in 1982.¹⁴

Since personnel cuts hurt the military's vested interests, many in the military resisted Deng's efforts.¹⁵ Therefore, from 1975-84 the military alternated between being streamlined and swelled.¹⁶ Deng's ineffective efforts to streamline the military prior to 1984 drove him to initiate a more drastic and systematic reform in 1985 to reduce personnel, with an emphasis on reducing non-combat cadres. As such, 11 military regions were reorganized and as a result the number of military regions was reduced to seven. Additionally, 31 army-level units and 4,054 division- and regiment-level units were eliminated, while 600,000 PLA cadres were placed outside the PLA's control. By 1987, the PLA's total personnel had been reduced from four million to three million.

In addition to personnel cuts, Deng consistently reduced the PLA's budget during the 1980s. As the table below shows, the PLA's nominal budget fell by 14.95 percent

from 1979 to 1980. Although the PLA's nominal budget crept back up during the 1980s, given China's high inflation rate, during this period the defense budget actually fell substantially in real terms.¹⁷ For instance, the defense budget in real terms in 1986 was only half of what it was in the late 1970s.¹⁸ Chinese defense economists have pointed out that the most drastic decline in China's defense budget occurred between 1984-88. If one indexes the real defense budget in 1978 to 100, the real defense budget for 1984-88 was 91.5, 89.1, 88.1, 85.7 and 75.2, respectively.¹⁹ China's nominal defense budget increased by 29.9 percent from 1980-89, but the inflation in China increased by 72.7 percent over the same period.²⁰

Table 4.1: *China's Official Defense Budget (1978-1994)*

Year	Defense Budget (100 Million RMB)	Defense Budget in Real Terms	Real Growth Rate of Defense Budget (%)	Defense Budget as percentage of GDP	Inflation Rate (%)	CPI (1978=100)	Defense Budget as Percentage of Total Government Expenditures
1978	167.84	167.84	12.75	4.60	0.7	100	14.96
1979	223.00	218.84	30.39	5.49	2	101.9	17.40
1980	193.84	177.02	-19.11	4.26	6	109.5	15.77
1981	168.00	149.73	-15.42	3.43	2.4	112.2	14.76
1982	176.00	153.85	2.75	3.31	1.9	114.4	14.31
1983	177.00	151.67	-1.42	2.97	1.5	116.7	12.56
1984	181.00	150.96	-0.47	2.51	2.8	119.9	10.64
1985	191.53	146.09	-3.22	2.12	9.3	131.1	9.56
1986	201.00	143.98	-1.44	1.96	6.5	139.6	9.12
1987	218.00	145.53	1.08	1.74	7.3	149.8	9.64
1988	251.00	141.09	-3.05	1.45	18.8	177.9	10.08
1989	290.00	138.16	-2.08	1.48	18	209.9	10.27
1990	330.31	152.50	10.38	1.56	3.1	216.4	9.41
1991	377.86	168.84	10.71	1.52	3.4	223.8	9.75
1992	425.80	178.83	5.92	1.40	6.4	238.1	10.10
1993	550.71	201.65	12.76	1.21	14.7	273.1	9.17
1994	636.72	187.82	-6.86	1.14	24.1	339.0	9.51

Source: *China Statistics Yearbook and China Finance Yearbook, 1991-1995*; the author's calculations based on the statistics listed in these yearbooks.

The PLA's Influence Under Deng Xiaoping: Case Studies

The PLA's influence in foreign and security policies was at a nadir under Deng Xiaoping. This was reflected not only in Deng's strategic vision on issues of war and peace, but also in the most pointed and high-stakes issue of the time – the British transfer of Hong Kong.

During Deng's era, the biggest difference between himself and senior PLA officers was regarding how to judge the threat level facing China, the perception of which was crucial to foreign policy and the PLA's core interest of building the military. Deng posited that the 1980s would be a time of "peace and development." In August 1982, Deng spoke of his hope for "no war for at least 20 years for China."²¹ In March 1985, Deng expanded on this view, explaining, "although there is still the danger of war, the forces deterring it are growing" and "there are two great issues confronting the world today, issues of global strategic significance: peace and economic development."²² In his speech at the enlarged conference of the CMC on June 4, 1985, Deng abandoned Mao's conclusion that war was "inevitable and imminent." By making such a pronouncement, Deng consolidated the ideological basis and justification for the major adjustment of national priorities, which prioritized economic development above all else.

Deng's defining the era as one of peace and development had two major implications for China's foreign and security policies. First, limited national resources would primarily be devoted to economic modernization and the PLA would face major budget cuts.²³ For example, the PLA Navy's (PLAN) request to build aircraft carriers, which then PLAN Commander Admiral Liu Huaqing strongly supported, was repeatedly turned down on the grounds that China did not have sufficient resources to fund such a project.²⁴ Second, Deng's prioritizing economic development over security considerations impacted China's foreign policy. He instituted an overriding principle of solving border disputes through peaceful means, and shelved issues of sovereignty in disputed areas. In 1984, Deng proposed shelving the territorial disputes over the Spratly

Islands in the South China Sea and the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands in the East China Sea, and instead prioritized focusing on joint development of the area's natural resources.

Deng's privileging of economic development also drove the PLA into wide-ranging commercial activities (aka PLA Inc.), ultimately a self-damaging path and a direction that General Zhang Aiping, the Minister of Defense at the time, and other professionally-minded senior officers strongly opposed but could do little about.²⁵ Zhang once publicly commented at a CMC Working Conference: "allowing the military and the government to operate businesses will inevitably lead to official profiteering. Official profiteering will inevitably create corruption. Profiteering by those who wear uniforms is the disgrace of the military and woes of the nation."²⁶ In 1988, Yang Shangkun followed Deng's lead and advanced a policy of "self-development, self-replenishment and self-improvement," which basically allowed the military to open factories and run businesses for profit.²⁷

Deng's approach hinged on his assessment that for China the international environment was relatively benign, which senior PLA officers never openly challenged. Yet diverging opinions did occasionally surface in carefully-worded speeches. In a December 1986 enlarged meeting of the CMC, Zhang Aiping raised the idea that "a wealthy nation with a wealthy society is not equal to a strong nation" and that "while military building relies on strength in economic development, appropriate funding and personnel should also be allocated to military building...because it takes time, especially the development of high technology."²⁸ In 1987, Zhang again openly revealed that the PLA's assessment was different than Deng's, that the PLA believed "China's

surrounding environment had various factors of instability,” and China’s “land territory and territorial sea are being threatened.”²⁹

Deng’s frail health in 1990 provided an opening for the PLA leadership to once again voice its disagreement regarding the threats that the nation faced. In 1992 and 1994, Liu Huaqing and Zhang Wannian discussed the threats China faced and warned of dangers surrounding the Taiwan issue, separatism in China’s border regions, and armed conflict along China’s perimeter.³⁰ Memoirs of Liu Huaqing and Zhang Sheng (Zhang Aiping’s son) further show the senior officer corps’ differences with Deng on the larger strategic threat assessment.³¹

Despite these disagreements, the PLA obeyed Deng unconditionally in the 1980s and early 1990s. A large number of PLA officers believe that the lack of attention to building and modernizing the military in the 1980s contributed to China’s weak response to a series of crises in the 1990s. They also believe, in retrospect, that corruption in the PLA started with Deng’s policy of tightening the defense budget and allowing the military to run independent businesses to support itself.³²

China’s policy toward Hong Kong from 1984 to 1997 illustrates the fact that the PLA had minimal influence over foreign policy under Deng. Deng played a crucial role in China’s tough stance toward Great Britain on two occasions during the long discussions over Hong Kong’s reversion: first, regarding the PLA garrison issue in 1984; and second, in 1992-93, when the Sino-British negotiations over Hong Kong seemed to be at an impasse.

In the early 1980s, China’s leadership had conflicting views regarding how to design Hong Kong’s future and there was even disagreement with Deng’s vision for

Hong Kong. At this time, some in the MFA argued that China should cut off Hong Kong's water supply from the mainland in order to force Hong Kong's return. However, in 1984 Deng ruled out this course.³³ Rather, Deng proposed to use the formula of "one country, two systems," in which Hong Kong would be returned to the mainland but be allowed autonomy in governance, with its capitalist system accommodated within a unified country under a socialist system for 50 years following its return. Deng's reasoning was that it was in China's interest to recover a prosperous and stable Hong Kong, rather than one that was impoverished and unstable.

Conservative officials such as Li Xiannian, who then headed the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group, continuously challenged Deng's prescription for the Hong Kong issue. Such officials believed that "Deng was just too soft."³⁴ Li expressed his deep suspicions about Great Britain at the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Meeting in March 1984, and suggested an early takeover of the territory.³⁵ Compared to the civilian leadership, the PLA leadership was much quieter on this issue, especially following the Geng Biao Incident.³⁶

In January 1989, Liu Huaqing, then the CMC Deputy General Secretary, hosted a CMC meeting to discuss the stationing of PLA troops in Hong Kong.³⁷ The main thinking of the PLA leadership on the Hong Kong issue in the 1980s was to pursue a peaceful transfer and transition. There were debates within the PLA about whether the PLA should have a garrison in Hong Kong at all and whether to take over all or partial British garrisons in Hong Kong. Therefore, the PLA initially did not make preparations for transfer by use of force or "starting all over again" (*lingqi luzhao*).³⁸

Deng was dissatisfied with the PLA's recommendations, criticizing the PLA for being indecisive and lacking focus and specifics. Deng pushed the military to take a tougher stance, acutely realizing the implications if the negotiations with Great Britain failed and Beijing "lost" Hong Kong.³⁹ After Admiral Liu spoke in a 1992 meeting, indicating that Deng already gave "repeated, very strong and unequivocal instructions" that the PLA "should not be soft," the CMC still did not hammer out specific contingency plans on Hong Kong.⁴⁰

After Chris Patten, Hong Kong's last British Governor, announced proposals to bring increased democracy to Hong Kong in his October 1992 Legislative Council speech, despite Beijing's warnings, Deng was incensed and urged, "on the issue of Hong Kong, in a nutshell, we cannot be soft at all."⁴¹ Deng's intended audience for this declaration was the PLA.⁴² At this time, the PLA's new leadership had just been installed. To follow Deng's exhortation, the CMC decided to speed up preparations to station PLA troops in Hong Kong and laid out limited countermeasures.⁴³

In Deng's eyes, the PLA's steps were still not enough. After reading the CMC's report, Deng threw it back and complained that it was "too soft."⁴⁴ Deng told Liu Huaqing to "be ready for the best and the worst case scenarios." At this point, the PLA drafted a contingency plan to take over Hong Kong by force, or in Liu's words, solving the problem of Hong Kong "at a different time, through another (non-peaceful) means." In other words, the PLA was prepared to use force to complete the transfer of Hong Kong to China and maintain stability during the post-transfer period in the event that Sino-British negotiations broke down.⁴⁵

Deng personally issued a warning to Great Britain in February 1993 that China might break its pledge ensuring Hong Kong's peaceful transition if Governor Patten refused to withdraw his plan for reforms.⁴⁶ Despite Deng's warning, in March 1993, Governor Patten published the draft reform bill. The next day, the Politburo Standing Committee held an emergency meeting on Hong Kong. Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Liu Huaqing reported to Deng on developments in Hong Kong. The PLA General Staff Department, under chief of general staff (CGS) Zhang Wannian's direct instruction, drafted a military contingency plan on Hong Kong, which the CMC passed unanimously and then sent on to Deng. Deng met with Jiang, CMC Vice Chairmen Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen, and Zhang Wannian at his home on November 3, while the military plan was again revised based on Deng's suggestions.⁴⁷ This contingency plan led to the PLA holding an intimidating military exercise in Hong Kong's vicinity. The exercise triggered strong reactions from Hong Kong and Great Britain. However, according to Zhang Wannian, this step helped to resolve the dispute over Hong Kong.⁴⁸ In June 1994, following 16 rounds of negotiations spanning seven years, China and Great Britain finally concluded their negotiations over Hong Kong.

China's policy toward Hong Kong from 1984 to 1997 reveals that the PLA repeatedly revised its policy positions to conform to Deng's wishes. The accounts of Generals Liu Huaqing and Zhang Wannian, as well as others, reveal that Deng was in firm control of the PLA's policies and actions throughout the 1980s in areas deemed to be part of China's core interests — and at the time none was as important as the transfer of Hong Kong. One can see the PLA following Deng's lead regarding the issue of establishing the Hong Kong garrison, as well as the drafting and revising of military

contingency plans for the takeover of Hong Kong once the British, in Deng's view, undermined negotiations. Deng even pushed the PLA to conduct a military exercise near Hong Kong. Throughout the process, Deng was the real decision-maker behind China's negotiations with Britain.

Deng was very clear about what he wanted regarding Hong Kong and was determined to get what he desired. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the more hawkish voices on policy toward Hong Kong came from the civilian foreign affairs system, not the PLA.⁴⁹ Both the MFA and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group advocated using coercive means to force an early takeover of Hong Kong. Deng instead put forward the formula of "one country, two systems," which was more tolerant and accommodating. On the other hand, Deng took a more hardline position than the military in policy options, pushing the PLA to be tougher.

On crucial foreign and security policies, Deng micromanaged the PLA and the PLA faithfully obeyed him. This is an important example of the PLA's generally minimal influence over foreign and security policies under Deng. However, it would be mistaken to interpret the case of Hong Kong as indicating that Deng micromanaged the PLA in all policy areas.

The Military's Approach to Exerting Influence under Deng

Although the PLA generally did not have much influence during Deng's era, there were some cases when the PLA did exert influence on policy issues. During one exceptional instance, such influence was generated through an unexpected conduit – a civilian leader with no prior military experience. The 314 Sino-Vietnamese Naval Clash

in 1988 took place because the PLA convinced Zhao Ziyang, who at this time Deng deeply trusted and who was preparing to take over Deng's CMC chairmanship, to take a tougher stance in the South China Sea. This case demonstrates that the most effective way for the PLA to exert influence in policies is to forge an alliance with a motivated and powerful civilian leader.

In 1987, Deng resigned all of his positions except that of CMC Chairman. Deng was in the process of transferring all of his powers to Zhao Ziyang, his designated successor, who was serving as the Secretary General of the Party and the CMC Vice Chairman. Deng held a CMC meeting in November, in which he announced that in the CMC, "routine policies need to be discussed between Zhao Ziyang and Yang Shangkun, but Zhao has the authority and the final say."⁵⁰

In early 1988, officers in the Guangzhou Military Region briefed Zhao on Vietnam's "aggressive acts" in the South China Sea while he was traveling through Guangzhou. The briefing shocked Zhao, who confessed "he had never been briefed by the MFA about how bad the South China Sea situation was."⁵¹ Zhao took on the case and asked Admiral Liu Huaqing to brief him on the South China Sea. Admiral Liu presented the Navy's proposals to build an ocean observatory on Fiery Cross Reef (which Yang Shangkun was slow to approve) as well as an airport on Woody Island (Yongxing Island in Chinese), and strengthen patrols in the South China Sea. After hearing Liu's briefing, Zhao agreed with his recommendation that the military should strengthen its control over the Spratly Islands and increase its patrols and construction in the South China Sea.

With Zhao's blessing, Liu joined with Hong Xuezhi, the other Deputy Secretary General of the CMC, and Chi Haotian, Chief of the General Staff as well as the

Commander and Political Commissar of the PLAN, to draft a proposal on strengthening China's military position in the South China Sea. The proposal also suggested that armed conflicts may be difficult to avoid and could be a good opportunity to train the PLAN.⁵² This report was presented to Zhao Ziyang and Yang Shangkun in the name of the PLA chief of general staff, the two vice chairmen of the CMC, and Deng Xiaoping. On February 29, Deng approved of this memorandum, followed by the Politburo Standing Committee's approval on March 10, which led to the 314 Naval Clash with Vietnam four days later.⁵³

Li Shuwen, then Chief of Staff of the PLAN's South China Sea Fleet and one of the commanding officers during the 314 Naval Clash, recalled that he received two military orders: that the PLA should drive the Vietnamese military off the island, and that it should not fire the first shot. This meant that once the CMC decided on war, the time of execution was left to the local unit under the South China Sea Fleet.⁵⁴ Once the political leadership gave the green light, the PLAN then made full preparations to execute the operation. The PLAN was only waiting for the right circumstances, namely for its adversary to fire the first shot. As frictions with Vietnam occurred frequently, the clash was inevitable.

That said, the 314 Naval Clash occurred even though the PLA itself did not come to a consensus on whether this naval clash should be carried out, what constituted a pretext to launch this battle, and what the desired goals should be, which led to confusion and contradictory commands throughout the incident.⁵⁵ The PLAN and the GSD disagreed on whether the clash was justified, i.e. whether the adversary did in fact fire the first shot, and how many islands the PLA should seize following the clash.⁵⁶ The core of

the first dispute was that the PLA forcibly carried out the order of removing Vietnamese troops from the disputed island, which caused physical fights between the two sides and triggered one “accidental” shooting of Vietnamese soldiers.⁵⁷ Chen Weiwen, the ranking officer on site during the clash, then launched the operation, which swiftly defeated the Vietnamese troops and sunk their ships. The second dispute resulted from some officers in the GSD Operations Department insisting on following the initial decision of the leader (presumably Zhao) to take back six islands. However, the PLAN in reality seized more than ten islands from Vietnamese control under Admiral Liu Huaqing’s direct orders.⁵⁸ In the end, the PLA Navy kept control over six islands it seized during the conflict, but eventually gave up the rest of the islands.

The 314 Naval Clash with Vietnam was an abnormal case during Deng’s era, which occurred after Admiral Liu, a visionary and strongly motivated naval strategist, allied with Zhao Ziyang, a top civilian leader who was driven to build his authority in the military and took the military’s case as his own priority. Admiral Liu attempted multiple times to push the Party leader to consider a more aggressive posture in the South China Sea as early as 1975, but Deng and others (such as Li Peng) did not follow his advice. Without Zhao’s support, the 1988 Naval Clash would have been another one of Admiral Liu’s proposals that went nowhere. The exceptional character of this successful case actually displays the PLA’s limitations in exerting influence on policies. It also reveals the crucial role that a powerful civilian alliance plays in helping the PLA get what it wants, without other bureaucracies, such as the MFA, weighing in and opposing the PLA.

Summary

In the 1980s and 1990s, the reunification question – with Hong Kong and Taiwan – remained the Chinese leadership’s paramount foreign policy concern. Although both issues were and are regarded by China as domestic affairs, foreign influences played a significant if not dominant role. Of the two, the transfer of Hong Kong was a particularly existential challenge for the Chinese government. Any leader who mishandled this issue would suffer catastrophically in politics and such mismanagement could cause the Chinese public to turn against the Party. Deng Xiaoping clearly understood this issue’s crucial importance. The Hong Kong issue is an example of how Deng handled high-stakes and sensitive issues by micro-managing them, from setting the bottom line to tending to tactical details. While Deng clearly dominated the negotiations on the British transfer of Hong Kong, other actors, including Li Xiannian, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the PLA, all played major roles. Yet it is clear that Deng set the bottom line for the military on major foreign and security policy issues and that the military closely followed Deng’s instructions.

With the exception of the Hong Kong issue, Deng was known to establish the bottom line but leave most of the tactical deliberation and implementation to the relevant bureaucratic agencies. This is where the traditional division of labor and the bureaucratic politics come in. In the foreign policy arena, the PLA had low-level influence with one exception – the Taiwan issue. Because of the PLA’s traditional expertise regarding the Taiwan issue, it was able to influence the decision-making process, particularly before 1992, when Jiang Zemin established control over the cross-Straits back channel.

The 314 Naval Clash in 1988, which occurred on Deng’s watch, was approved by Deng, but was initiated by a strongly motivated PLAN and a sympathetic civilian leader

– Zhao Ziyang. The exception proves the rule: if one looks closely into this case, it actually illustrates the main point of this section, namely that the PLA indeed had minimal influence under Deng.

The PLA's Influence under Jiang Zemin

The Party-military relationship during Jiang Zemin's era (1989-2002) is divided into two distinct periods: the transitional period (1989-94), when Jiang tried to overcome obstacles and political interference and had weak control over the military; and the consolidation and control period (1995-2002), when Jiang consolidated his power and established effective control over the military.⁵⁹ By 1998, when Jiang launched the campaign to remove the PLA from the marketplace, he had firmly established effective control over the military.⁶⁰

When political reliance exists, whether the top leader can effectively control the PLA determines whether he can trust the military to serve his interests in a time of need. Jiang needed the military's support throughout his tenure. During the transitional period, when he did not have effective control over the military and therefore did not trust the military to serve in his favor, Jiang attempted to confine and shrink the military's role in China's political process, including in policy-making. For example, in 1992 Jiang took over the cross-Straits secret envoy from the PLA, which at the time was managed directly by Maj. Gen. Yang Side and overseen by Yang Shangkun. The back channel was especially valuable to the Chinese leadership because they believed that through this platform they could hear the Taiwanese leader's true agenda without it being "contaminated" by his worries about public opinion and potential backlash on the island.

Additionally, the Chinese leadership believed that the Taiwanese leader could be more flexible if any commitment he made would not be made public.

Additionally, Jiang bucked the military and the advice of Admiral Liu Huaqing from 1991-99 when he decided against arming the PLAN to more aggressively assert its interests in the South China Sea. Once Jiang finally consolidated his power and control over the military, he relied more on advice from a small circle of trusted advisors, which included senior military officers. Jiang partially integrated and elevated the PLA's interests in his policy priorities, which he seemingly did in order to appease and strengthen his power base.

Transitional Period (1989-94)

In 1989, Deng handed over the CMC chairmanship to Jiang Zemin. Many observers thought Jiang was just a transitional figure, given his lack of a power base in elite politics and the military.⁶¹ During this transitional period, Jiang recognized that he needed the military's support in order to consolidate his political power, but he was slow to establish effective control over the military because of political interference by Deng and Deng's appointees. Between 1989 and 1994, Jiang was first blocked by the Yang brothers and then impeded by Admiral Liu Huaqing and, to a lesser extent, General Zhang Zhen, who Deng appointed to "tutor" Jiang in military affairs. The transitional period of 1989-94 was one in which political succession and intensive power struggles in the Party led to the military leadership's seemingly more active participation. As a result, Jiang cultivated support in the military by granting the PLA more professional autonomy, while shrinking the space for the military leadership's influence in policy-making.

Deng Xiaoping's Political Interference and its Aftermath

A clear instance of the former CMC chairman heavy-handedly employing the PLA for political purposes can be seen between 1989 and 1992, when Deng's dominance over the PLA was clearly demonstrated and Jiang's control over the military was very weak. Deng was the last top political leader with war-fighting experience and, as a result, commanded the PLA's deep loyalty. This special status with China's military chiefs helped Deng push through his preferred national program in the early 1990s. Throughout 1990, Deng met with Jiang Zemin and Li Peng, who at this time were the Party General Secretary and the Premier, respectively, about making Shanghai a special economic zone (SEZ), an idea that Chen Yun — leader of the arch-conservative camp and Chairman of the Central Advisory Commission — opposed.⁶² Jiang Zemin, then leaning more towards Chen Yun and Li Peng on economic policies, was initially non-committal to Deng's efforts and turned a deaf ear to Deng's advice.⁶³ Chinese media did not address this debate until several months later, when officials in Shanghai, Zhu Rongji in particular, allowed *Liberation Daily* to "compile Deng's earlier comments into a four-part series" without revealing the fact that Deng was behind this move.⁶⁴ During this episode, the PLA leadership unequivocally sided with Deng.⁶⁵ In October 1991, Yang Shangkun, the CMC Vice Chairman, publicly agreed with Deng and argued for bolder reform and wider economic liberalization.⁶⁶

Later, during his 1992 southern tour, Deng used his influence over the PLA to box in Jiang. The People's Armed Police (PAP), under the PLA's command, arranged Deng's entire southern tour, in which he emphasized the need to continue on the path of

economic reform and launched attacks against the conservative camp.⁶⁷ When Jiang did not respond to Deng's actions, Deng turned up the heat when he visited the city of Zhuhai, one of the first SEZs.⁶⁸ There, he ostensibly held a meeting on "military planning," which Yang Shangkun, Admiral Liu Huaqing, and Yang Baibing attended. During this meeting, they all endorsed Deng's veiled warning to Jiang that "whoever is opposed to reform must leave office."⁶⁹ The strong military representation at the Zhuhai meeting made it abundantly clear to Jiang that, if necessary, the high-level military brass was willing to turn against him and back a different future leader.⁷⁰ The PLA General Politics Department (GPD), headed by Yang Baibing, organized three groups of senior officers to tour Shenzhen and Zhuhai, intended to demonstrate the military's support for Deng's position.⁷¹

Then, during the March 1992 Politburo meeting, Yang Shangkun forcefully backed Deng's ideas, while Jiang followed by expressing full support for Deng's efforts and "admitting that he had been too lax in promoting reform."⁷² In retrospect, it is clear that by March 1992 Deng had won this political battle and Jiang had gotten into line – both publicly and privately – with Deng's policies.⁷³ Despite Jiang's acquiescence, Yang Baibing snubbed Jiang by instructing the *PLA Daily* to write an editorial entitled "(the PLA) acting as the protector for reform and opening up." This editorial was intended to remind political insiders that the military, not Jiang, protected and supported Deng's ideas.⁷⁴ Over the following months, Yang Baibing continued to push the PLA to publicly support Deng's policies.⁷⁵ On August 1, all commanders and political commissars of the seven military regions wrote articles promising "protection" for economic reform and opening up.⁷⁶ The explicit lack of respect and even disparaging attitude the Yang brothers

displayed toward Jiang was public knowledge among senior PLA officers. A military officer from the Guangzhou Military Region put it thus in an interview:

Jiang was swaggering and conceited. But Yang Baibing simply told him to shove it. In 1990, all the leaders of the Center enjoyed special military supplies (food and groceries from military-owned farms). Jiang's family never received such benefits after moving to Beijing in 1989 and when they inquired why not, the CMC office replied that special military supplies are only provided for active-duty officers and that Zhao Ziyang did not get it either. That answer certainly did not go down well with Jiang.⁷⁷

During and immediately after Deng's period as China's preeminent leader, Yang Shangkun was "Deng's man," and his representative and liaison in the PLA. Yang was Secretary General and subsequently Vice Chairman of the CMC, and in those positions he was largely responsible for the CMC's daily work. It is clear that the PLA's ardent political support and participation in Deng's southern tour initiative, which was intended to force Jiang's hand, was instrumental to Deng's political success, a fact that Deng also saw as a potential danger.⁷⁸ A politically active PLA with its own agenda, with all the strength and resources it commands, could pose a formidable challenge to any political leader.

One incident in particular seems to have accelerated Deng's determination to remove the danger of an overly powerful PLA, which would have destabilized the new political leader, Jiang Zemin. In late August 1992, Yang Baibing summoned a meeting of those he considered trustworthy to discuss the PLA's future personnel promotions. In this meeting, many attendees criticized Jiang's lack of vision and his inability to direct military affairs. In short, they doubted his ability to assume the chairmanship of the CMC. The Yang brothers also drafted a list of around 100 PLA officers who they planned to promote, and did not consult Jiang during the drafting of this list. From September 7-10 1992, the CMC held a meeting to discuss the PLA's personnel issues in preparation for

the 14th Party Congress. Yang Baibing, concurrently Director of the GPD and thus overseeing personnel promotions, raised the list with Jiang after getting consent from Liu Huaqing and Yang Shangkun. Jiang went to Deng and presented this list as proof of the Yang brothers' ever-growing power in the military and their attempt to replace those loyal to Deng.

Yang Shangkun allegedly suggested to Deng that he should “retire while Yang Baibing moves to the top to enter the Politburo Standing Committee.”⁷⁹ Yang Shangkun mistakenly believed that he had gained support from the PLA's elderly patrons, but in actuality “old comrades such as (Generals) Zhang Aiping, Xiao Ke, and Yang Yong all opposed him!”⁸⁰ Professional soldiers had long resented the fact that Yang Shangkun ran the PLA, as he lacked the seniority that the PLA treasured. Such professional soldiers believed Yang's expertise and experience clearly did not match the high status he enjoyed. Professionally-oriented officers were depressed by the Yang brothers' use of political maneuvering to sideline their opponents and expand their influence. This political battle was also fought along bureaucratic lines. Officers from the GSD and the GLD, long overpowered by the GPD, feared that Yang Baibing's further ascendance to the top would mean the further decline of their agencies. These officers seized this opportunity to side with Jiang to take down the Yang brothers. General Zhang Aiping, the former Defense Minister, publicly opposed the concepts of an “Army of the Yang Family” and a family-governed monarchical country.⁸¹ Admiral Liu Huaqing, Deputy Secretary and then Vice Chairman of the CMC, who lived in the Yang brothers' shadow, explicitly backed Jiang in the face of the Yang brothers' accusations.⁸²

The Party's elders such as Peng Zhen, Chen Yun, and Li Xiannian were also long dissatisfied by the Yang brothers' expanding power, and opposed the Yang brothers for many of the same reasons as the professional soldiers.⁸³ These elders believed that Yang's power was so great that it could harm stability and harmony.⁸⁴ Wang Ruilin, Deng's long-time military secretary, understood the balance of power and realigned himself with Jiang against the Yang brothers during this political struggle. Therefore, the Yang brothers, with their power peaking in 1992, faced challenges from all sides, which to a large extent indicated the vulnerability of their power base in the military.⁸⁵ Yang Shangkun found out the hard way that his true source of power was Deng Xiaoping. Those who granted power could take it away.

The Yang brothers' extensive political participation and their explicit scorn for Jiang could possibly have emanated from Deng himself. In 1990-91, Deng was extremely dissatisfied with Jiang and Li Peng. Deng could have (mis)led Yang Shangkun into thinking that he had made up his mind to replace Jiang and Li. During this period, Deng and Yang were so close that Yang was the only senior leader who stayed with Deng for the Spring Festival three years in a row (1989-91).⁸⁶ Although it is still unclear why Deng ultimately decided to strip the Yang brothers of their power, it is clear that Deng understood Jiang had a very weak position vis-a-vis the PLA, and that without settling this issue Jiang would not survive long in power. Such a scenario could lead to chaos and instability within China's top leadership and China more generally. Deng genuinely believed that soldiers should be kept from intervening too much in politics and that China's political stability trumped all other matters. Deng had initiated the military's involvement in politics and now it was his turn to end it before it spiraled out of control.⁸⁷

Before the start of the 14th Party Congress, Deng wrote a letter to the Politburo that gave his opinion on how CMC personnel arrangements in the future should be made. According to Liu Huaqing's recollection of this letter, Deng stated, "In the future, the routine work of (the) CMC should be directed mainly by two comrades, Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen, under the leadership of Comrade Jiang Zemin. As for the task of choosing (their) successors, the responsibility shall be left to those who are familiar with the military."⁸⁸ At the 14th Party Congress, the Yang brothers were removed from their formal positions in the military leadership, but were not purged from the Party. This came about through two maneuvers – both of which were schemes that had previously been used. The first entailed abolishing the positions of the CMC Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General. The second was officially promoting Yang Baibing to the Politburo but in reality stripping him of all his power in the PLA. More importantly, after removing the Yang brothers themselves, almost all of those on Yang Baibing's list for promotion were sidelined. Further, a large number of PLA officers previously sidelined by Yang Baibing were reinstated to positions that matched their experience and talent.⁸⁹

The PLA-dominated Back Channel with Taiwan

As Jiang had weak control over the military in the transitional period of 1989-94, he tried to shrink the space that the PLA could exert influence over. One such area was Taiwan policy. During Mao's era, the PLA had almost exclusive control over the study of the Taiwan problem, with military intelligence and counter-intelligence officers monitoring developments in Taiwan and making recommendations, as the Taiwan problem was characterized as "struggles with enemies" and the step yet to be taken to

complete the victory of China's revolution.⁹⁰ Therefore, almost all of those involved in the Taiwan issue in the 1980s had a background in military intelligence, counter-intelligence, united front work, and military propaganda.⁹¹ The PLA's historical legacy of having a hand in Taiwan policy is evidenced by the fact that the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), the semi-governmental organization that specializes in people-to-people exchanges across the Taiwan Strait, was founded in the PLA GSD's compound in 1991.⁹²

Deng Xiaoping did not have any official position on the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG), but he was the key person who pushed the focus of Taiwan policy away from war-fighting ("liberating Taiwan militarily") and "struggles with enemies," toward peaceful talks. Therefore, Taiwan policy during Deng's era was much less militarized and less emotional than during Mao's era. Deng later presented the vision of "one country, two systems" to solve the Taiwan problem, which was then applied to Hong Kong. In Deng's era, the PLA still had notable influence over Taiwan policy, as evidenced by the prominent positions of Yang Shangkun, the CMC Vice Chairman who also headed the TALSG, Maj. Gen. Yang Side, who was the Director of the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), and to a lesser degree Ye Xuanning, who headed the PLA GPD Liaison Department. These PLA officials controlled the secret cross-Strait envoy communications, which were initiated in December 1990 at the Hong Kong residence of Nan Huai-chin, a well-respected Zen master.⁹³

The PLA's active participation and even its leading role in these clandestine talks between Taipei and Beijing led to China's relatively calm response to America's 1992 sale of 150 F-16 A/B fighter aircraft to Taiwan.⁹⁴ The Taiwanese envoy informed the

PLA of the U.S. sales to Taiwan well in advance. When Tseng Yung-hsien, Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's secret envoy, asked Yang Shangkun, then a CMC Vice Chairman, in their meeting how Beijing would respond to the upcoming fighter jet sales, Yang replied calmly, assuring Tseng that "due criticism (from our side) will surely come."⁹⁵ Yang essentially reassured Taiwan that despite the inevitable tough and vocal criticism that would publicly come from China, Beijing understood and accepted the Taiwanese leadership's explanation and the sale would not fundamentally obstruct the development of cross-Strait relations.

The sale of the F-16 fighters to Taiwan, which according to China's official interpretation violated the three communiqués that China and the U.S. had reached, resulted in a tough diplomatic response, which included reprimanding U.S. Ambassador Stapleton Roy with the "strongest protest," suspending China's participation in UN arms control talks, and selling M-11 missiles to Pakistan in retaliation. However, all responses were directed at the U.S., not Taiwan. The PLA was notably silent throughout this incident, though America's arms sales to Taiwan hurt the PLA the most. One can reasonably conclude that the PLA leadership was convinced that through the secret envoy communications, which it oversaw, the cross-Strait relationship was heading in the right direction, despite the arms deal. Thus, the PLA was willing to accept the arms deal as a means of preserving this back channel.

The relative calm and tacit understanding between Beijing and Taipei ended after the Yang brothers' downfall, though the change in the lead contacts for the secret envoy was just one of many reasons for the ensuing stormy cross-Strait relationship. Jiang Zemin took over the secret channel with Taiwan from the PLA in 1992 and rerouted it

through Singapore. Jiang also entrusted his close civilian advisors, Wang Daohan and Zeng Qinghong, with overseeing most engagements with Taiwan. As such, the PLA was left with a participatory and intelligence advisory role in the policy process. The PLA still played a significant role in forming China's Taiwan policy in the latter half of the 1990s, but was not as dominant as it was prior to and during the 1980s.

Jiang's Rocky Relationship with Admiral Liu Huaqing

After the Yang brothers' downfall, Jiang had a rocky relationship with the military leadership, which was headed by two career soldiers, Admiral Liu Huaqing and General Zhang Zhen, both of whom Deng Xiaoping nominated. Both Admiral Liu and General Zhang sided with Jiang during the political battle against the Yang brothers in 1992.⁹⁶ Jiang and these professionally-inclined officers opposed the Yang brothers for different reasons – Jiang in order to increase his political power, and the professional officers in order to combat the further politicization of the military – but shared the same goal. Once the Yang brothers were out of power, however, this alliance crumbled. Liu and Zhang, the two elderly CMC vice chairmen, with prestige and experience, helped sustain Deng's partial influence within the PLA and stalled Jiang's efforts to establish control over the PLA. To signal his goodwill, Jiang initially took a more relaxed approach to the management of military affairs by giving Liu and Zhang “unprecedented autonomy in running the army.”⁹⁷ Jiang agreed to leave the details of military affairs to professional soldiers on the CMC, and chose not to attend most CMC working meetings, which in his absence Admiral Liu led.

Jiang instead focused on cultivating his relationship with rising PLA officers.⁹⁸ Since 1993-94, Jiang had established a substantial network of trusted officers in the PLA, headed by General Zhang Wannian, Chief of General Staff and then CMC Vice Chairman, General Yu Yongbo, who played a significant role in determining officer promotions as Director of the GPD, and General Xiong Guangkai, who headed military intelligence as the Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Through these senior officers, Jiang “held a conclave of General Staff officers and regional commanders to plan defense strategies,” though “the deeper agenda was ensuring the army’s loyalty” to Jiang.⁹⁹

As Jiang started to consolidate his power in the military, his highly personalized style of management led to repeated clashes with Admiral Liu. Jiang preferred to call officers personally by phone, asking their opinions and then issuing instructions directly, rather than going through traditional channels.¹⁰⁰ This led to clashes and a thorny relationship between Jiang and Admiral Liu, the military’s last representative on the PBSC.¹⁰¹ Admiral Liu insisted that military affairs be the purview of professional military officers, since they best understood such issues. Also, Liu frequently repeated Deng’s instruction that the CMC chairman should work *through* vice chairmen, who would assist in executing orders, to implicitly accuse Jiang of inappropriately intervening in military affairs. As one PLA officer said,

Admiral Liu Huaqing’s relationship with Jiang Zemin then became almost as bad as (Jiang’s relationship) with Yang Baibing. Jiang was greedy for power and control. He liked to put fingers in every matter. Serious corruption in the military began when Jiang took control as CMC Chairman, principally because he focused on cultivating his own people. More than once, Admiral Liu slapped the table in front of Jiang to accuse him of unduly intervening in military affairs.¹⁰²

Because of the discord between Jiang and Admiral Liu, Jiang carefully confined the PLA’s influence in policy areas by: lowering the level of the PLA’s representation;

setting a pre-conceived goal or deadline; putting in place checks and supervisory measures from another government agency; and publishing detailed procedures. The level of the PLA's representation on the TALSG was lowered after 1992. Yang Shangkun headed the TALSG prior to his retirement, after which Jiang took that position. Admiral Liu was in charge of the PLA's professional development, including armament development, army training, and army-building. As the military's highest-ranking officer, Liu would have been the person occupying the military's seat on the PBSC as long as it had a seat. Instead of giving Liu a role in policy-making, Jiang excluded him from exerting influence through bodies such as the CCPCC Secretariat and the TALSG. Jiang clearly did not consult Liu on foreign and security policies. Even Admiral Liu's influence in the PLA's own armament development was constrained because of his poor relationship with Jiang.¹⁰³ As such, Admiral Liu appears not to have played an important role in the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis.¹⁰⁴

The handling of the Yinhe Incident is also evidence of Admiral Liu's lack of influence.¹⁰⁵ China signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in January 1993, and the Yinhe Incident took place in July of that year.¹⁰⁶ Admiral Liu started to head China's Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) Negotiation Leading Group in 1992, which was in charge of China's negotiating strategy on both the CTBT and the treaty to ban chemical weapons. Admiral Liu had been the real decision-maker behind the Arms Export Leading Small Group (AELSG) since it was established in 1989.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the handling of the Yinhe Incident rightly fell under Admiral Liu's purview. U.S. intelligence had very specific information that the Chinese Yinhe container ship was shipping chemicals that could be used to make mustard and nerve gas. Robert Einhorn, Deputy

Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, communicated to the MFA through Stapleton Roy, then U.S. Ambassador to China, a request to “see whether these goods were on board and detain them.” The MFA assured Ambassador Roy that the goods in question were not on board and stated, “we invite you to inspect the ship.”¹⁰⁸ Jiang told Ambassador Roy and a congressional delegation headed by Senator Chuck Robb that there were no illegal chemicals aboard the ship.¹⁰⁹ Roy concluded that the goods were not on board “since an inspection proving him (Jiang) wrong would be extremely damaging to (Jiang’s) reputation” and urged Washington to tone down the rhetoric.¹¹⁰ However, U.S. intelligence insisted that its information was credible. Therefore, Einhorn pressed the case for inspection and Secretary of State Warren Christopher concurred.¹¹¹ After negotiations with the MFA, the Yinhe pulled into a Saudi port and unloaded its cargo to be inspected.¹¹² However, no chemicals were found onboard. Admiral Liu later reminisced that the two incidents that “humiliated” and “angered” him most in his life were the Yinhe Incident and the sending of the two American aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in 1996.¹¹³

As he was handling the Yinhe Incident, Admiral Liu was most likely overruled by Jiang. Liu was evidently sympathetic to the PLA’s arms exporters, some of whom the U.S. accused of selling sensitive material and technology, thereby aiding proliferation. When China’s defense industry inquired as to the plausibility of exporting arms to a given country, Liu “always gave such a succinct answer – as long as someone asks for it, we will sell it,” according to the recollections of an official from China’s defense industry.¹¹⁴

Admiral Liu's more encouraging attitude toward arms sales is consistent with the PLA's bureaucratic interest. Arms exports produced revenue that was partly used to procure armaments for the PLA, which helped offset the challenges it faced due to a declining defense budget. From 1986 to 1990 alone, Poly Technologies Corporation (Poly Group Corporation), the PLA's main arms trader, gave US\$20 billion of its profits from exporting arms to the PLA, so that the PLAN and PLAAF could purchase badly-needed armaments.¹¹⁵ China's arms exports averaged US\$100 million annually in the 1990s.¹¹⁶ Poly Group, under the GSD, Kaili Group, under the GPD, Xinxing Group, under the GLD, and Xinshidai Group, under COSTIND (later the GAD), as well as businesses run by the different services and military regions, constituted a powerful interest group that strongly resisted China's participation in the international non-proliferation regime in the early 1990s. To these companies, the proliferation of sensitive material and technology was often an enticement they could offer their customers during negotiations for more lucrative conventional arms deals. More importantly, the children of former leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Wang Zhen have controlled or protected these arms-exporting companies.¹¹⁷ From decision-makers at the top level to enforcing agencies, it was tremendously challenging to put these companies under the MFA's supervision, which understood the implications of proliferation of sensitive material and technology. Jiang personally intervened during the Yinhe Incident and was most likely backed by the MFA, based on how this incident played out. Jiang's intervention, however, contravened Admiral Liu's preference. Jiang's eyes were set on a big political prize – his first meeting with President Clinton, which was being planned to occur during the APEC summit in November of that year.

The MFA was the lead agency diplomatically that dealt with the Yinhe Incident, and did so without the military's full cooperation. In fact, the PLA was silent throughout the Yinhe Incident. Sha Zukang, the diplomat who negotiated and dealt with the U.S. throughout this crisis, confessed in a talk at Renmin University in 1994 that he had no clue whether or not the alleged chemicals were on the Chinese ship when he took over the negotiations.¹¹⁸ "Jiang was upset at the PLA over the Yinhe Incident," said an insider who was close to both the PLA and the MFA.¹¹⁹ Jiang personally participated in the handling of the crisis.

Admiral Liu later reminisced that the Yinhe Incident, in which China allowed the U.S. to inspect its own civilian ship on the high seas, was one of the two most humiliating and angering experiences in his life.¹²⁰ Apparently Admiral Liu was either not consulted throughout the incident or, more likely, consulted but not listened to by Jiang. In 1997, China publicized the Arms Export Management Regulation and applied stricter licensing and regulating methods that barred China's defense industries from engaging in proliferation activities without the prior approval of both the State Council and the CMC. This was in part a result of the Yinhe Incident and Admiral Liu's retirement.

During Jiang's transitional period, the biggest price Liu Huaqing paid for his animosity toward Jiang was Jiang's stifling Liu's lifetime ambition of seeing China build its own aircraft carrier and his taking an alternative approach to the South China Sea.¹²¹ Even though he was the CMC's Vice Chairman in charge of defense science and technology, Liu could not realize his dream of building an aircraft carrier. His vision was for China to develop a medium-sized aircraft carrier fleet in order to strengthen its position in the South China Sea. The PLAN differed with the rest of the PLA regarding

the direction of the PLA's force structure. Even the PLAN itself was split internally between investing in aircraft carriers or submarines.¹²² However, the real resistance came from the civilian leadership, especially Jiang. In spite of this resistance from the top leader, Admiral Liu tried hard to press his case within the PLA and took his case to the Politburo. He called on the CMC to host several special sessions on the aircraft carrier project during his decade-long work in the CMC (1988-97).¹²³ Admiral Liu, when he was a member of the PBSC, also sent a proposal to the Politburo that called for the construction of three aircraft carriers by 2010. During internal debates, Jiang said that the aircraft carrier project should be suspended while continuing feasibility studies.¹²⁴ Admiral Liu acknowledged that his failure to establish the aircraft carrier project during his decade on the CMC was the biggest regret of his career.¹²⁵ Jiang's lack of support reinforced the opposition from other services and from the PLAN's internal "submarine" faction to the aircraft carrier project.¹²⁶ This opposition also torpedoed the PLAN's request to the PLAAF that it include several Su-27K, then the most advanced Russian-made carrier-borne aircraft, in its Su-27 fighter procurement deal with Russia.¹²⁷

With this, not only did Jiang stymie Admiral Liu's ambitious dream, but he also denied the followers of Liu's vision in the PLA in even blunter terms. For instance, when a senior officer of the South China Sea Fleet in a meeting in December 1991 mentioned how important aircraft carriers were for the PLAN and China's long-term national security, Jiang blasted the idea in front of everyone, saying: "Just days ago I greeted Vietnamese Party Secretary General Do Muoi and hugged him to end the decade-long conflict between China and Vietnam. China finally has peace on its border (with Vietnam). Now you dare to bring up this idea (of building aircraft carrier), which will

only make our Vietnamese friend think I am cheating them?”¹²⁸ Soon after Jiang publicly humiliated this senior officer, the latter was forced out of the Fleet and put on a track to early retirement. From that moment on, nobody brought up the idea of building an aircraft carrier in front of Jiang.¹²⁹

Jiang’s policy differences with Admiral Liu were certainly not just a result of their political differences. Premier Li Peng, a strong political figure in Chinese politics¹³⁰ and foreign policy in the early 1990s,¹³¹ formed a consensus with Jiang over the “Good Neighbor Policy,”¹³² though Li had minimal influence in the PLA. Moreover, Jiang distanced himself from the more aggressive South China Sea policies that his disgraced predecessor Zhao Ziyang advocated, perhaps under Admiral Liu’s influence. Jiang Zemin’s hallmark foreign policy directive, a strategy of engaging with neighbors on China’s periphery while solving or shelving territorial disputes, was developed in parallel with his central focus on improving Sino-U.S. relations.¹³³ Termed the “Good Neighbor Policy,” this became the guiding principle of China’s foreign policy beginning in March 1991.¹³⁴ In December 1992, Jiang emphasized that the military should “create a long-term stable security environment for China’s reform and opening up alongside the goal of modernization.”¹³⁵ In January 1993, Jiang also pointed out at a CMC meeting that “China’s surrounding security environment has been improving” and “China’s ‘Good Neighbor’ relationship with its surrounding countries is in the best period since 1949.”¹³⁶ However, in order to implement this strategy, China had to become more willing to compromise in negotiations over territorial disputes.

The PLA held particularly strong feelings toward negotiations with two countries: Vietnam and Russia. Regarding the Vietnamese case, the PLA preferred to negotiate

land- and sea-based territorial disputes in tandem, as a packaged deal, rather than solving them separately.¹³⁷ The PLA took this approach because it had a military advantage over Vietnam on land but was behind Vietnam on the seas. However, the PLA's advantage on land outweighed its disadvantage on the seas. The PLA wanted to leverage the former to accomplish a favorable outcome on the latter, since the PLA's line of control on the land borders far exceeded what China traditionally claimed with Vietnam.¹³⁸ "The prevailing military opinion then was that land territorial disputes should be linked to the dispute on the seas and that we should maintain strong pressure against Vietnam on land as long as the Spratly dispute was not solved."¹³⁹ However, the MFA, with the State Council's backing, overruled the PLA's proposal.¹⁴⁰ As for the Russian case, the PLA was largely sidelined and excluded from territorial negotiations. The MFA dominated the relevant surveying and mapping of territory, in which the PLA at best played a secondary role.

The military's ability to influence debates over policy is determined by whether the military can alter the outcomes of such discussions, which in turn is a measure of the PLA's overall influence. In this case, Admiral Liu, who clearly prioritized the aircraft carrier program and the protection of China's rights and interests in the South China Sea, could not mitigate Jiang's opposition to the aircraft carrier program, or his general policy position on the South China Sea disputes.

A military leadership that did not fully subordinate itself to Jiang's control, as exemplified first by the Yang brothers and then by Admiral Liu Huaqing, characterized Jiang's transitional period. Although Jiang was slow to establish control over the military and Deng still exerted significant influence when he chose to, Jiang tried to shrink the military's space in policy-making when he was able to do so.

Jiang Consolidates His Power (1995-2002)

In 1995-96, Jiang's consolidation of power in the Party is marked by his taking down Chen Xitong, the former mayor of Beijing who was Jiang's political rival and a Politburo member, on corruption charges, and arresting Zhou Beifang, a close friend of Deng's family. The 4th Plenary Session of the 14th CCP Central Committee in September 1995 signaled a significant win in personnel affairs, as Jiang managed to add a series of political allies onto the Politburo and its Standing Committee, as well as the Secretariat. Jiang was dedicated to pushing through the "rejuvenation" of cadres at the central as well as the local level, and in the military through the campaign of "cultivating talents well adapted to the 21st Century." This was a glorified excuse to skillfully retire the elder generation who held powerful positions and were less likely to follow Jiang's orders. In 1992-93, the majority of senior PLA officers at the level of military region principal who reached or were over 65 years old had to retire. In 1994, You Xigui, who had been in charge of Jiang's personal security detail since Jiang's days in Shanghai, was put in charge of the Central Bodyguards Bureau (Unit 8341). Prior to this, Yang Dezhong, who Deng deeply trusted, held this position. In addition, Jia Ting'an, Jiang's longtime personal assistant, was appointed Deputy Director of the CMC General Office in 1994, which manages the logistics of the CMC's daily activities and facilitates its communications, meetings, and orders.

Jiang further consolidated his power after Deng's death in 1997, as signaled by his retiring of Qiao Shi, his biggest political rival.¹⁴¹ Jiang recorded a significant victory when he successfully terminated the military's representation on the PBSC after Admiral

Liu retired.¹⁴² “Jiang used peaceful rise/development of China and the Party’s absolute control of the military as the reasons to keep the military out of the Standing Committee. In essence, Jiang was afraid of having to fight another Liu Huaqing or Yang Baibing for power and control over the PLA,” said a senior active-duty PLA officer.¹⁴³ Since this move, the PLA has yet to regain its representation at the State principal level, and its representation at the State deputy level has been limited to two to three seats (the two CMC Vice Chairmen as Politburo members, and the Defense Minister as State Councilor). In 1998, Jiang launched a campaign of “emphasizing politics,” which he primarily used to consolidate his absolute authority over government and military systems.

Jiang’s goal was to use these struggles with senior generals to more effectively subordinate them, and he succeeded in doing so using several approaches. First, Jiang cleaned house by turning over the PLA’s personnel three times from 1992-94, launching an anti-smuggling and anti-corruption campaign in 1997-98, and announcing PLA personnel cuts of half a million officers in 1997. Jiang sidelined the officers close to the Yang brothers and the majority of officers who appeared on Yang Baibing’s promotion list.¹⁴⁴ In the interim, Jiang loosened the requirements for promotion to full general in order to allow his preferred candidates to enter the military leadership, and used the position of full general as a carrot to incentivize the officers he did not favor to voluntarily retire.¹⁴⁵ Second, age limits were much more strictly enforced on PLA officers, especially senior officers, through the revision of the “Regulation on Active-duty Officer Service” in May 1994, in order to push out a large number of senior officers loyal to the previous generation of PLA leaders.¹⁴⁶ This helped to make room for younger

officers who were more adept at leveraging new technology. While those younger, second- or third-tier officers that the Yang brothers favored were sidelined, Jiang helped almost a whole generation of officers leapfrog over other officers and assume positions of leadership more quickly.¹⁴⁷ Third, beginning in 1993 Jiang launched a campaign “stressing political awareness,” which in essence aimed at strengthening the traditional authority of the CMC chairman and more specifically following “Chairman Jiang” and safeguarding Jiang’s authority.¹⁴⁸ Fourth, in early 1995, Jiang put in place a two-track system for managing PLA officers: strengthening political indoctrination and cracking down on corrupt PLA officers.¹⁴⁹ The large-scale auditing and inspection process, combined with the anti-smuggling campaign headed by General Yu Yongbo, created a long list of military officers vulnerable to corruption charges and therefore opened up a window of opportunity for Jiang to maneuver.¹⁵⁰ Fifth, and most importantly, between 1997 and 1998, the PLA’s divestiture from its commercial interests, the anti-smuggling campaigns, personnel cuts, and organizational restructuring all combined to bring enough pressure on senior PLA officers to toe the line and build their personal loyalties toward Jiang.

In the military, Jiang achieved considerable though not full control. Neither General Zhang Zhen nor Admiral Liu Huaqing retired in 1995, contrary to Jiang’s wishes. Zhang Wannian, who was close to Jiang, and Chi Haotian, who was close to Deng Xiaoping, were promoted to vice chairmen of the CMC. Wang Ruilin, Deng Xiaoping’s long-term secretary and former director of the CMC Chairman’s Office (1983-90), became a member of the CMC (1995-2002) but remained the Deputy Director of the

GPD, which was an unprecedented measure and clearly a political compromise between Jiang and Deng.¹⁵¹

Jiang made less noticeable but nonetheless significant progress with regards to promotions of commanders and political commissars of military regions, as well as senior officers at the military region principal and deputy levels. The PLA officers Jiang promoted to consolidate his power base in the PLA included Li Xinliang, who was elevated to Commander of the Shenyang Military Region in 1995 and then Commander of the Beijing Military Region in 1997, Guo Boxiong, who was promoted to Commander of the Lanzhou Military Region in 1997, and Liao Xilong, who became Commander of the Chengdu Military Region. Jiang Zemin was particularly skilled at manipulating personnel affairs.¹⁵²

Jiang consolidated his control over the PLA not just through nepotism and coercion, but also by identifying with the PLA's pursuit of professionalization, improving the PLA's material well-being,¹⁵³ and providing the military with access to himself.¹⁵⁴ Most importantly, by supporting the standardization of the PLA's education¹⁵⁵ and training programs, and backing the PLA's modernization to adapt to the revolution in military affairs (RMA), Jiang resonated with the younger and more professionally-minded PLA officers. Jiang raised army salaries to at least 20 percent above those of local officials of comparable rank in 1993-94.¹⁵⁶ In 1995-96, Jiang led a series of military exercises in the Taiwan Strait intended to intimidate Taiwan by displaying the PLA's capabilities. In 1996, the CMC clarified for the first time that the PLA needed to shift to military preparations for a localized war under high-tech conditions. Jiang ardently supported the shift of the PLA's armament development toward high-tech weapons

systems that could penetrate the defense of a militarily superior opponent.¹⁵⁷ Jiang's technical background and interests fit well with the younger PLA officers' need for a force structure transformation to meet the challenges that RMA presented.¹⁵⁸ In July 1997, Jiang promised that as China's economy grew, so too would its defense budget, and that increases in defense expenditures would focus on building armaments.¹⁵⁹ Such efforts helped Jiang establish effective control over the PLA by 1997, signaled by his announcement that he would cut half a million troops in September of that year. This was followed by Jiang's efforts to remove the PLA from the marketplace in 1998, which helped him win the support of retired generals such as Zhang Aiping and professionally-oriented officers.¹⁶⁰ By this time, the PLA had become one of Jiang's power bases.

Jiang's Trusted Generals

With ineffective control over the military and therefore weak confidence in the military's willingness to serve his interests, the top political leader would be more distanced from the military and seek to confine the military's influence in the political process, including policy-making. This pattern is evidenced by Jiang's conflictual relationship with Admiral Liu Huaqing during his transitional period. While consolidating his control in the Party and the military from 1995-97, Jiang not only applied coercive measures to replace those who worked against him, but also took measures to win support from important power bases within the PLA.

Although foreign/security policies sometimes overlap heavily with the purely military side, which could then bring in various actors along the line (including, for example, GSD's Operations Department), only a few senior PLA positions, according to their mandates and portfolios, are directly relevant to the formulation of military opinions

regarding foreign and security policies. The most relevant position was deputy chief of general staff at the military region deputy level, which oversaw military intelligence and military foreign affairs. Along these lines, the assistant chief of general staff assisted the above position and played a tactical role. The defense minister, who oversaw military diplomacy, in most cases enforced policy but did not act as the policy-maker. However, while the first-ranking deputy chief of general staff oversaw war-fighting, the chief of general staff and vice chairmen of the CMC possessed the real decision-making powers. Their opinions would supersede all the officials who held the above positions when disagreements occurred, as military diplomacy and military affairs overlap. However, who top leaders seek counsel from and how much counsel they seek from a particular officer depends largely on their relationship with that officer and, secondarily, what that officer's portfolio and position is. Under Jiang, the PLA increased both its access to the top leader and its ability to influence core issues that it prioritized. Jiang's close relationship with Xiong Guangkai, director of the Second Department of the GSD and then the Deputy Chief of Staff for intelligence and military diplomacy, had significant power in framing the issues for Jiang, as he controlled the intelligence that Jiang received from the PLA.¹⁶¹

As part of his drive to consolidate power over the military, Jiang first visibly appointed senior officers he trusted to be part of existing policy consultation mechanisms within the Party's domain. Therefore, the officers Jiang trusted could elevate their importance and play a more active role in policy-making. In September 1997, the CCP Central Committee added General Zhang Wannian to the Politburo.¹⁶² More importantly, General Zhang became Secretary of the Secretariat in 1997, which provided Zhang with

more channels to insert the military's opinions on policies.¹⁶³ In 2000, General Zhang became Deputy Director of the TALSG, while General Xiong Guangkai had already been a member of the TALSG since 1997.¹⁶⁴ Jiang's confidence in senior officers such as General Xiong is not easily quantified by looking at their official positions, and in fact Jiang relied on such officers for personal counsel frequently. By the time Jiang had transferred the positions of the presidency and CCP general secretary to Hu Jintao in 2002, the PLA had become one of Jiang's principal power bases. Jiang rewarded the PLA's allegiance by becoming the PLA's primary advocate on the need for military modernization and to a certain extent supporting its position on the Taiwan issue. Jiang's relationship with the PLA was one of mutual influence and reinforcement.

The circle of trusted PLA officers that Jiang cultivated beginning in the early 1990s greatly expanded by 1997 as he consolidated his power over the military. Having said that, it was certainly a balancing game Jiang played to satisfy his own needs and those of other power bases in the PLA. Most of those who entered the CMC during Jiang's first term had exceptional expertise and some, such as Zhang Wannian, were even recommended by Deng. Not all of those who made it onto the CMC were particularly close to Jiang, such as Chi Haotian, who was promoted based on merit and maintained close ties to Deng and Deng's family.¹⁶⁵

Some with a solid power base and overlapping loyalties could survive with a new master and make peace on both ends, such as Wang Ruilin, Deng's longtime secretary, who remained a member of the CMC until 2002. Wang Ke and Cao Gangchuan were not only close to elders such as Liu Huaqing and Deng, but also identified themselves with

the direction of the PLA's modernization under Jiang. In the end, only a handful of people who Deng once favored or demonstrated strong potential made it onto the CMC.

Not all of those who were close to Jiang were close to each other. For example, Liang Guanglie did not get along with Xu Caihou, though both were relatively close to Jiang.¹⁶⁶ Because Jiang needed to balance his personal interest in establishing control over the military with that of satisfying existing powerbases within the PLA, four out of nine members of the CMC in 1999 were political officers.¹⁶⁷

Personal ties to Jiang were a necessary but not sufficient condition for officers to have the ability to influence Jiang with regards to foreign and security policies. General Yu Yongbo, Director of the GPD, was instrumental in pushing through the campaign of political indoctrination and the promotion of officers based on both professional credentials and loyalty to Jiang. General Guo Boxiong, who personally pledged allegiance to Jiang in the early 1990s, was fast-tracked for promotion and joined the CMC in 1999 as the 1st ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff, and in 2002 became a Vice Chairman.¹⁶⁸ General Xu Caihou became a member of the CMC in 1999, serving as Executive Deputy Director of the GPD. Xu, who became Director of the GPD and Secretary of the CCPCC Secretariat in 2002, was one of Jiang's favorites due to his attempts to promote Jiang's voice in the military by pushing ideological education and knitting the network of officers who followed Jiang at various levels. However, it is doubtful that either General Yu or General Xu had much influence on Jiang in foreign and security policies, given their personal interest and expertise in either personnel and political work or the PLA's parochial institution-building and management.¹⁶⁹ For example, during Politburo meetings, Xu very rarely spoke up on topics related to any

foreign and security policies, and when Xu was instructed to speak on certain issues, he would consistently wander off topic.¹⁷⁰

Zhang Wannian, Vice Chairman of the CMC, stands out among Jiang's trusted generals as one of the strongest supporters of Jiang's foreign policy in the 1990s and one of the two generals who were most able to influence Jiang's decision-making.¹⁷¹ Jiang's manipulation initially brought Zhang into his camp. In addition, while serving as Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, Zhang won Jiang's trust by defying General Yang Baibing's campaign to politically cleanse officers who voiced disagreement with the Tiananmen Square crackdown.¹⁷²

General Zhang was instrumental in influencing and hardening Jiang's posture toward Taiwan. For instance, in the days following Lee Teng-hui's July 9, 1999 public articulation of a "two-state theory" to solve the cross-Strait issue, with Jiang's blessing, Zhang convened a special meeting of the CMC to study possible responses. The CMC concluded that the military should orient itself toward "fighting an early war and a real war on Taiwan, a war with the possibility of intervention by a strong enemy," which Zhang repeated when visiting PLA troops a few months later.¹⁷³ During the same meeting, the CMC decided to carry out a "997 Operation," which was a large-scale military exercise in the area around Taiwan that used 100,000 troops.¹⁷⁴ Following this, on July 14, Jiang hosted a Politburo meeting and Zhang briefed the participants about the ongoing "997 Operation."

Deng instructed the CMC in 1989 to "bring major issues to the Politburo Standing Committee for discussion."¹⁷⁵ In reality, there is no clear definition of what a "major issue" is, and therefore such instructions can be ignored. Thus, the CMC has the

prerogative, or as David M. Lampton puts it, “room to run,” to decide what a “major issue” is, and thus what needs to be reported to the PBSC.¹⁷⁶ However, China’s response to Lee Teng-hui’s two-state concept illustrates that even during crucial moments in matters of strategic importance, the CMC has the sole purview over military affairs, provided the CMC chairman gives his consent. The CMC can make an independent assessment and draft plans prior to consulting with the Party leadership’s top decision-making body.

Perhaps the most representative of Jiang’s close ties to the PLA is his association with General Xiong Guangkai. Xiong was the first and only PLA officer with a background in military intelligence to attain the position of deputy chief of the general staff.¹⁷⁷ Although in comparison with members of the CMC Xiong held a lower-level position, as overseer of the PLA’s intelligence apparatus for 17 years (1988-2005) who was also able to gain Jiang’s trust, Xiong held the most advantageous position to advise Jiang on foreign and security policies.¹⁷⁸ Compared with Deng, Jiang’s disposition was to solicit and pay much more attention to intelligence and information. Jiang was anxious about ensuring full access to valuable intelligence and information on domestic and foreign affairs issues.¹⁷⁹ Xiong had far more access to Jiang than his predecessor, Xu Xin.¹⁸⁰ Between 1997 and 2005, Xiong represented the PLA during seven consultative defense dialogues with the U.S. Xiong also represented the PLA for nine strategic consultations that the GSD held with its Russian counterpart. Moreover, Xiong played a crucial role in several critical top-level decisions on foreign policy matters of great consequence, such as China’s response to America’s accidental bombing of China’s

embassy in Belgrade and its response to Lee Teng-hui's moves toward establishing Taiwan's de jure independence.¹⁸¹

Xiong was instrumental in crafting China's response to the May 8, 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.¹⁸² In the emergency meeting held following the incident, General Xiong represented the PLA in briefing the PBSC.¹⁸³ He provided the PBSC members with the GSD's assessment that the incident was "a deliberate act by the U.S. government" but "it was *not* President Clinton's policy to bomb the Chinese embassy."¹⁸⁴ General Xiong "advocated a tough response."¹⁸⁵ Later that day, General Zhang Wannian chaired an emergency meeting of the CMC, where the decision was made to put troops on alert status.¹⁸⁶ Apparently, a military option – possibly retaliation by use of force – was on the table.¹⁸⁷ The summary of the CMC meeting was sent to Jiang and prompted Jiang to write a response on the night of May 8. Without directly responding to the military option, Jiang initiated the designation of increased funds for the nation's military modernization program.¹⁸⁸

Xiong was arguably persuaded that the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy was indeed an accident, which the U.S. side took great pains to explain.¹⁸⁹ However, once the military adopted the stance that "the NATO bombing was intentional" as its official position and presented this view to the PBSC, Xiong could not retract it without damaging himself politically.¹⁹⁰ "One of the three major interest groups in Chinese politics is the policy-maker. Once the policy-maker decides upon a policy, he will defend his policy to the death even when he knows the policy is a mistake," commented a senior PLA officer.¹⁹¹ Xiong paid a visit to the United States in January 2000, five months after the embassy bombing, to repair mil-to-mil relations. However, as of 2014, the conviction

that the 1999 bombing was *not* an accident still stands as the official conclusion among Chinese government officials and military officers.¹⁹²

Lee Teng-hui's introduction of a "two-state theory" that challenged the status quo of cross-Straits relations, combined with the bombing of the Chinese embassy, drove Jiang to reconsider and then accept an initiative from Xiong Guangkai and Zhang Wannian that Zhang proposed as early as 1995: a shift in China's national strategic focus from "one center" (economic development) to "two centers" (economic development and military preparation).¹⁹³ Jiang therefore lent credibility to the proposal that China adopt a timeline for military preparations to liberate Taiwan by force.¹⁹⁴ Neither of these critical changes in policy was announced publicly for fear of touching off a war of words with the U.S. and exacerbating the cries for action among the Chinese public.

Xiong also played an important role in shaping China's response before and during the 2000 Taiwan presidential election. Lien Chan's proposed "win-win" strategy for cross-Straits relations was communicated to Beijing in 1999. Although many in the military intelligence community and those connected to the Taiwan Affairs Office believed in late 1999 that Lien would probably lose the election, Xiong kept assuring Jiang that Lien would win. Xiong knew that this assessment was pleasing to Jiang's ears, and he did not give an objective account of the election's outlook. This threw China off balance when Lien lost to the pro-independence Chen Shui-bian, as "there was no Plan B."¹⁹⁵ As a result, China again overreacted during its response to the election result.¹⁹⁶

Xiong dominated China's approach to the Sino-U.S. mil-to-mil relationship from 1992-2004. For instance, as a result of his personal assessment, the PLA did not send a high-level delegation to participate in the Shangri-La Dialogue, an Asian security summit

that the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) think-tank convenes annually in Singapore. Xiong strongly resisted this forum, as he saw it as a channel the U.S. relies on to interact with Asian countries on broad regional security issues and gang up against China.¹⁹⁷ This policy of resistance stood until Xiong's successor, Zhang Qinsheng, took office and led a high-level delegation to this forum in 2007.¹⁹⁸

After Xiong's retirement, the PLA leadership approved new regulations, which mandated that the intelligence department *not* submit policy suggestions as part of their reports. Further, the deputy chief of general staff (DCGS) in military intelligence and military diplomacy's portfolio was split and given to two separate DCGS in 2012.¹⁹⁹

The PLA's Influence under Hu Jintao

Under Hu Jintao, the PLA had less direct influence in the policy-making process than it did under Jiang Zemin, due to Hu's distanced relationship with and weaker control over the PLA. In 2002, Hu took over two of the three key leadership posts from Jiang Zemin, those of general secretary of the Party and president. However, Jiang remained the Chairman of the CMC until 2004. Hu was weak both in domestic politics and in military affairs. Under Hu, the PBSC's voting mechanism was greatly strengthened, which implied the weakening of the power of the Party general secretary and a continued shift toward collective leadership and decision-making.

Jiang continued to exert strong influence over the military during Hu's tenure, especially when he was still the Chairman of the CMC. Even after Jiang handed the CMC chairmanship to Hu, Hu was not able to establish effective control over the military and his relationship with the military's leadership was distanced. As a result, Hu tried to

shrink the space where the military leadership could exert influence. In response, the military's leadership tried to strengthen the military's relative power by using media outlets to publicly share their views and shape public opinion. Hu allegedly reprimanded some military officials for doing this, and attempted to stop the military from taking this approach. Under Hu, the military leadership in some instances stalled the enforcement of policies that Hu had decided upon. Finally, during Hu's tenure, the divisions and frictions between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system greatly increased. There were several instances when the military went ahead without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which indicated the PLA had "room to run."²⁰⁰

Jiang Zemin's Political Interference

Unlike Jiang, who was the CMC chairman for 15 years (1989-2004),²⁰¹ Hu was the CMC chairman for only eight years (2004-12). In comparison, Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, the two CMC vice chairmen who served Hu, sat on the CMC for 13 years (1999-2012). Similar to the constraints that Jiang faced due to the interference of Deng Xiaoping and the Yang brothers during his transitional period (1989-92), Hu faced the problem of acquiring official political power without taking effective control over the military. In comparison to Jiang, who benefited tremendously from Deng's relatively unselfish removal of the Yang brothers from the PLA in 1992, Hu faced a predecessor who was much more eager to hold onto power and would manipulate the military to achieve this goal.

Between 2002 and 2004, Jiang controlled the PLA. Jiang sustained his influence over the PLA through a network of officers whose primary allegiance was to him, not Hu,

especially in the upper echelon of the PLA's leadership. The contradiction of power and authority during this period further segregated the military from the government and created the problem of "two centers," as Hu had ultimate power over governmental affairs, while the military had to listen to Jiang's commands.²⁰² As a result, the military became more entrenched in dealing with military affairs, while Hu distanced himself from the military and tried to exclude the military from government affairs as much as possible. Hu started to establish control over the military, but the military's promotion procedures had been relatively standardized with built-in requirements, which meant that influence over the promotion of favored officers had to start early, and the pool of very top officers was "sticky" and slower to change. Therefore, by the end of Hu's tenure, he had established a certain amount of control over the PLA by placing trusted officers at the level of military region principal and deputy.

Jiang's decision to retain the CMC chairmanship until 2004 violated the CCP Constitution, as he was no longer a CCP Central Committee member and therefore could not be the CMC chairman. Jiang justified his move to the domestic audience by stating that he was merely "copying Deng's practice" (*deng gui jiang sui*) and following Deng's example of "guiding the new leadership for a stretch of road who just got on the horse" (*qi shang ma, song yi cheng*).²⁰³ To a foreign audience, Jiang justified his decision by claiming, "all the people in the military wanted me to keep (the CMC chairmanship)."²⁰⁴ Since Hu Jintao was the 1st Vice Chairman and Jiang Zemin was the Chairman of the CMC, Hu remained subordinate to Jiang in the military's command-and-control structure from 2002-04.

Jiang took advantage of every opportunity to prove his ultimate leadership over the PLA. For example, in 2003 Jiang announced a reduction in PLA personnel of 200,000 over the next two years.²⁰⁵ In 2003, when the PLA North China Sea Fleet's submarine (Number 361) sank due to a "mechanical malfunction," which killed all 70 crew members, Jiang immediately sent his condolences as the CMC Chairman, ahead of Hu.²⁰⁶ During extensive news coverage of this accident, Jiang was consistently mentioned first and Hu second, a message meant to remind the PLA and CCP cadres that Jiang still held ultimate control over the military, despite the fact that Hu was the Party's top leader and the President of China.²⁰⁷ When Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan's speech to the astronauts before the launch of the *Shenzhou 5* manned spaceship was broadcast live on October 15, 2003 and watched by hundreds of millions of Chinese, Cao claimed he was sending his congratulations on behalf of "the CCP center, the State Council, the CMC, and Chairman Jiang Zemin." Hu Jintao's name was not mentioned.²⁰⁸

Such words and public gestures were just the tip of the iceberg, but signal the deeper and more entrenched power struggles between Jiang and Hu. By retaining the CMC chairmanship, Jiang was able to further entrench his power in the military by placing his own men in top PLA leadership seats from at least 2002-07, since the tenures of the CMC members and vice chairmen are renewed every five years under normal circumstances. In 2003, Jia Ting'an, Jiang's secretary, became the Director of the PLA CMC office, which controlled the traffic of information to the CMC and communications among CMC members, and served as Deputy Director of the GPD from 2007-14.²⁰⁹ In June 2004, just before Jiang's official retirement as CMC Chairman, he promoted 15 officers, most of whom were primarily loyal to him, to the rank of full general.²¹⁰ These

officers included Liu Zhengu, the former Commander of the Hong Kong Garrison and the Guangzhou Military Region, and You Xigui, Jiang's longtime personal bodyguard and later his security chief, which violated the rules regarding promotion to full general.²¹¹

In 2007, Hu accomplished less impressive but nevertheless important personnel moves in the PLA. Hu rotated the commanders and political commissars of five out of seven military regions.²¹² Hu managed to appoint his own choices to become the commander and political commissar of the strategically important Beijing Garrison, naming Li Shaojun and Liu Mingfu, respectively, to these positions.²¹³ Hu also tapped Fang Fenghui to be commander of the Beijing Military Region (BMR), which made Feng the youngest of the seven military region's commanders. In 2012, in an unprecedented move, Fang was promoted to chief of general staff (CGS), thereby becoming the first BMR Commander to be promoted to CGS in the PLA's history.²¹⁴ Zhang Qinsheng and Zhang Yang, both close to Hu, became Commander and Political Commissar of the Guangzhou Military Region, respectively. In 2007, Cao Qing, formerly Marshal Ye Jianying's bodyguard, replaced You Xigui as the Director of the Central Bodyguards Bureau (Unit 8341). Jia Ting'an was relieved from his position as Director of the CMC General Office (Deputy Director in 1994-2003 and Director in 2003-2008), an army corps-level unit, and transferred to be deputy director of the GPD, a military region deputy position.²¹⁵ Though it seemed to be a promotion, Jia's power was significantly reduced at the new position. General Zhang Qinsheng, who was one of Hu Jintao's most trusted generals, became the first-ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff in 2009.

Hu's overall control over the PLA, however, was still weak. Even in 2007, when Hu would have presumably had a free hand to pick his own CMC team, Guo Boxiong

and Xu Caihou stayed on as vice chairmen. Even after 2004, Jiang continued to intervene in senior officer promotions by preventing or slowing the promotion of officers known to be closer to Hu than to him.²¹⁶ For example, Li Zuocheng, a highly decorated war hero who became the youngest corps commander in 1998, offended Jiang by changing the location of Jiang's photo in the Chengdu Military Region's headquarters to a less glamorous place in 2002.²¹⁷ After serving four years as the army corps commander, Li, who by custom should have been promoted to the level of military region deputy, was transferred to be Deputy Chief of Staff in the Guangzhou Military Region and served another five years at this level.²¹⁸ Having said this, after 2004, Jiang did not have decisive control over personnel matters in the military, and instead had to balance his preferences with Hu's.²¹⁹

Additional examples of Hu's inability to exert full control over the PLA and Jiang's continued interference abound. Major General Yang Chunchang, former Deputy Director of the Department of Armed Forces Development Research, Academy of Military Sciences, publicly commented on Xu Caihou's monopolizing power in the PLA and isolating the CMC's top leader, i.e. Hu Jintao.²²⁰ In 2007, Hu authorized the CCPCC General Office to devise a plan for further military reform. One of the purposes of this reform was to reduce the bloated size of the officer corps and to streamline the procedures of command-and-control in order to facilitate the "jointness" of the services. The military reform plan encountered strong resistance in the PLA and could not be carried out. The 2008 Wenchuan earthquake became an excuse for the military to formally shelve the plan.²²¹ In an extraordinary move, Jiang kept his office in the Bayi Building, the PLA's official headquarters, changing its name from the Office of the CMC

Chairman to “Jiang Zemin’s Office.” This office served as a venue for Jiang to extend his influence in the PLA after his retirement as CMC Chairman in 2004.²²² Hu, it should be noted, never moved into the Bayi Building.²²³ “Unless certain protocol absolutely required Hu to be present in the Bayi Building, Hu seemed reluctant to even step into it (throughout 2002-12). He was certainly not comfortable lingering in the building after the ceremonies he had to attend,” a senior PLA officer observed.²²⁴ Yang Hui, whom Hu distrusted since he was one of General Xiong Guangkai’s protégés, headed the GSD’s Second Department (military intelligence and foreign affairs) from 2007-11.²²⁵

Hu’s personality and managerial style also contributed to his distanced relationship with and distrust of the PLA. A retired senior government official recounts his impressions of Hu’s approach as a leader:

Hu only trusted his small circle of advisors, just like Obama. His closest advisor, Ling Jihua, was a local official who “ascended to heaven” by following Hu. Ling had neither vision nor expertise in foreign policy, but was nonetheless a gatekeeper for Hu. However, if you are not in his small circle, how could you influence Hu’s thinking in policies? Hu distanced himself from the military, since he did not have any roots in it. His personality was different from Jiang’s. When facing the same difficulties, such as the problem of having no roots in the military, Jiang would try every means to elbow his way in. Hu is different. Hu would circumvent the difficulty and go around it as far as he can.²²⁶

Hu treaded carefully in order to avoid any thorny problems with the PLA. Both Liu Yuan, Liu Shaoqi’s son and the Political Commissar of the GLD, and Liao Xilong, Chief of the GLD, urged the CMC to prosecute Lieutenant General Gu Junshan, the Deputy Chief of the GLD, who was known to be deeply corrupt. But Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, both Vice Chairmen of the CMC, protected Gu.²²⁷ Gu confronted Liu Yuan, who was investigating Gu’s case, slapped Liu’s desk and asked, “who are you? How dare you touch me?”²²⁸ Liu was deeply insulted and took on the prosecution of Gu as a personal mission. Liu sought help from Xi Jinping, Hu’s anointed successor and the 1st Vice Chairman of the CMC, to persuade Hu to pursue this case. Xi loyally transmitted Liu’s

messages to Hu but Hu was hesitant. With Xi's efforts, the CMC eventually sent out at least three ambiguous orders to seek investigations against Gu, but each order was painstakingly resisted.²²⁹ Liu Yuan co-wrote a strongly-worded letter with Liao Xilong, who as head of the GLD was Gu's boss, which was sent to all active-duty and retired full generals and asked for their support in Gu's prosecution. This letter resulted in the PLA senior officers reaching a consensus on this issue. Only then did Hu intervene and express his consent to have Gu fully investigated.²³⁰

The Military and China's Foreign and Security Policy under Hu

Despite Hu Jintao's incrementally increasing control over the military after 2007, especially at and below the level of commanders and political commissars of military regions, his relationship with most of his top generals in the CMC remained distant. Jiang maintained his strong influence over the PLA leadership, especially among the top layer of senior officers. Therefore, Hu tried to constrain the PLA's influence regarding major foreign and security policy areas by removing or downgrading the PLA's representation in policy-making mechanisms and by redirecting the military toward missions other than a war in the Taiwan Strait.²³¹ Hu had supporters in the military that agreed with his policy of increasing engagement with foreign militaries and China's contributions to disaster relief, which intentionally turned the PLA away from its fixation with a Taiwan contingency. Moreover, through this reorientation Hu and the PLA could have a mutually beneficial relationship: the PLA polishing its public image through disaster relief operations; and Hu enhancing his image by effectively solving crises that affect many people's well-being. Thus, the overall picture of the PLA's influence under Hu was

mixed, as the PLA and Hu cooperated on some issues, while on others the two sides did not see eye-to-eye. Hu's weak control over the military translated into his failure to promote his loyal followers into the top military leadership, which in turn caused bitterness among his followers in the military. The PLA leadership in general had a low-level of direct influence on Hu.

This was also a period when the PLA, though politically weak at the top, was more of an independent actor on national policies, due to Hu's weak control over the military and some military officers' conflicting loyalties. For those who were granted less access to Hu, their natural response was to undermine the civilian foreign affairs system's influence, a bureaucracy that was largely under Hu's control. A political leader with weak control over the military meant greater difficulties for China's civil-military relations. On the other hand, the PLA continued to professionalize and specialize, pulled by the development of the revolution in military affairs (RMA). Military affairs, in many officers' opinion, had become too professionalized and too intricate for the outside world to understand, much less interfere with. This trend compounded and further worsened the existing segregation between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system. As a result, almost no civilians or their institutions, other than Hu or Jiang, could penetrate into the military's realm.

Revision of China's Taiwan Policy and Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)

The first and most important policy revision that Hu managed to make once he was in power was regarding China's Taiwan policy. Security contingencies, above all else, allow for and legitimize the PLA's influence, and no security contingency under

Hu was more dangerous than the Taiwan issue. Hu managed to change the orientation of China's Taiwan policy by relying on mainly civilian advisory agencies and effectively crowding out the military by introducing more actors into the policy-making process. After Hu took control of the TALSG in 2002, he relied on civilian advisors and aides to help him formulate Taiwan policy.²³² Institutionally, Hu encouraged the United Front Department and the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) to develop strong research and information-collection capabilities, and to craft accurate, realistic, and pointed assessments and policy recommendations for Taiwan that were devoid of ideology and ignored pre-existing policies.²³³ Hu regularly invited those who directly interacted with Taiwanese businessmen, local governors/mayors who had major interests in developing the cross-Straits relationship, and external experts to attend TALSG meetings. The PLA retained two seats on the TALSG due to its traditional influence over Taiwan policy. In short, under Hu there was a proliferation of participants in the deliberation and policy formulation process on Taiwan, which effectively diluted and weakened the PLA's influence and voice (as well as Jiang's) regarding Taiwan policy.

Hu fundamentally disagreed with Jiang's approach to the Taiwan issue, characterized in the 1990s as "offense by pen and intimidation by sword" (*wengong wuhe*), because this approach, though seemingly tough and threatening, was counterproductive and was backing Beijing into a corner. Rather, Hu believed that a conciliatory policy towards Taiwan that emphasized developing economic and cultural links and expanding ties with the DPP would have been more beneficial to easing the tensions across the Taiwan Strait. This new thinking on Taiwan, which later produced positive results both in developing cross-Straits relations and in earning applause from the

American government, served Hu well politically from 2002-04, when Jiang still held the PLA's reins and, for a time, did not show any inclination toward retirement. In 2003 and 2005, Beijing allowed direct flights between both sides of the Taiwan Strait during Spring Festival, which gradually increased in frequency. In 2009, direct flights across the Taiwan Strait were officially launched. Increased interactions through such initiatives effectively gained the Taiwanese public's goodwill and improved the political environment. Hu initiated the 2005 Taiwan Pan-Blue visits, which facilitated groundbreaking visits by delegations of the Kuomintang (KMT), including the KMT's Chairman, Lien Chan, and the Chairman of Taiwan's People First Party (PFP), James Soong.²³⁴

Hu tried to shrink the space in which the top military leadership could exert influence. Unlike during Jiang's era, under Hu the PLA's top leadership was rarely invited to present their views to the PBSC. During the process of devising the Anti-Secession Law (ASL), Hu is known to have stated, "(on the issue of Taiwan) the PLA's only job is war-fighting."²³⁵ Hu was signaling that the PLA should not intervene in the decision-making process on whether a war should be fought, which represented a stern position for Hu to take.²³⁶ Hu rarely took into consideration the opinions of either Generals Guo Boxiong or Xu Caihou on foreign and security policy and "in the few cases he did consult them, they were not forthcoming for fear of offending Hu."²³⁷

In March 2005, the National People's Congress passed the ASL, which demonstrated Hu Jintao's control over Taiwan policy. Although the law is often interpreted in the West as a step backward for Beijing's thinking on Taiwan, it was actually a giant step forward from Jiang's policy following the 1995-96 Taiwan Straits

Crisis of political intimidation and military coercion. This law reveals the Chinese government's new thinking on the Taiwan problem: as long as Taiwan does not step over a red line by proclaiming independence, China would not intervene in Taiwan's internal affairs, despite the vaguer language in other clauses that mandates the use of force.²³⁸ This law indicated a clear shift of emphasis from urging reunification under Jiang to opposing Taiwan independence under Hu. The law did so by implicitly acknowledging the reality of separate political entities across the Taiwan Strait and showing that China did not feel great urgency to force Taiwan to reunify with the PRC.

Hu understood a shift in the military's overall posture was needed to sustain this important policy change that carried with it far-reaching military implications. Therefore, Hu strongly supported the shift of the PLA's focus to "military operations other than war" (MOOTW). In addition to the critical reason explained below, a convergence of several forces drove the significant shift toward MOOTW. From 2008-11, while the world was mired in the most serious recession since the Great Depression, China's real GDP grew by an average of 9.6 percent. The PLA's budget increased in line with and at some points outpaced China's GDP growth. Yet as the PLA acquired more resources and capabilities, but did not use them to fight wars, it faced pressure to justify its increasing budget.²³⁹ A Chinese scholar succinctly summarized these public doubts as he stated, "We now need to tell the Chinese people why we have the PLA. We are no longer poor, but are we weak? If we don't use it, why purchase it?"²⁴⁰

Hu prescribed "new historic missions," also known as the "three provides and one role" mantra, in which he essentially urged the PLA to focus more on MOOTW.²⁴¹ Though the PLA still maintained that its chief mission was to fight and win regional wars

under informationized conditions, Hu's newly assigned "historic missions" pushed the military to think beyond Taiwan. MOOTW, neither a Chinese nor a new concept when Hu introduced it in 2008-09, gained new urgency and became a higher priority after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. MOOTW focused on domestic disaster relief and safeguarding CCP rule, while pushing the military at the same time further out to engage in peace-keeping operations (PKO), military exercises with other militaries, and anti-piracy operations to safeguard the international commons such as those in the Gulf of Aden.

MOOTW served multiple purposes simultaneously. The shift to MOOTW answered public doubts as to why the PLA is needed and the increase of the defense budget is necessary. It also reoriented the PLA from its sole focus on intensive preparation for a war over Taiwan, and enabled the Chinese government to more swiftly respond to the public's needs during emergencies, which would help it maintain legitimacy. Essentially, MOOTW describes military preparations away from war, a strategy tailored for a peacetime military. It is an attempt to justify the PLA's increased budget without resorting to war to do so, which Hu strongly supported for political reasons.

Hu's Trusted General

Some professionally-oriented officers took this opportunity of re-orientation through MOOTW to exponentially increase the PLA's participation in military diplomacy and joint military exercises.²⁴² Joint military exercises with foreign militaries have historically been a common practice for Western militaries. However, not until the

PLA delinked holding joint military exercises with its still active “non-military alignment policy” in 2004-05 did it become more “outward-oriented” and begin to pursue international military engagements.²⁴³ General Zhang Qinsheng was not the only officer who had been pushing the PLA in this direction, but he was the right person in the right place at the right time, making him the most important advocate of it.

General Zhang Qinsheng, the first-ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff (2009-13), was unique in that he had a far-sighted strategic vision. He had independent ideas, and was known to be extremely hard-working.²⁴⁴ Although a talented officer, he had two fatal flaws: his overly strong and defiant character, and his record of fast promotion. Zhang’s talent, which led to his fast promotion, sowed the seeds of his eventual (though honorable) demise.²⁴⁵ Because he was promoted relatively quickly, Zhang failed to cultivate a strong and diverse power base in the military. A PLA officer remarked that Zhang’s career path demonstrates, “getting up earlier doesn’t necessarily mean having good health.”²⁴⁶ In the PLA, whoever gets promoted quickly fails to build up a power base that is sustained by multiple sources of support, and ends up with sometimes fatal vulnerabilities during politicized battles. Rather, long-term service with combat troops at multiple military regions is necessary for sustaining the vitality of a PLA officer’s military career. Moreover, throughout its history all of the PLA’s top leaders have been to a certain degree parochial and inward-looking, as they oriented themselves toward building credentials and their networks, developing the units they stayed in, and doing “what their superior officers and potential patron desire.”²⁴⁷ As a senior PLA officer remarked when explaining General Zhang’s failure to advance to a top position in the CMC:

All PLA top leaders follow the same path of reaching the top positions and then begin to make up for lessons about the outside world. If everyone follows this path, they will feel intimidated by someone at similar levels who have knowledge, ideas and visions about the outside world and where China or the PLA should go. If such a senior officer, like Zhang Qinsheng, who has knowledge, vision, and is willing to work extremely hard advances to a senior position, how could other senior officers live (with it)? In other words, Zhang was a threat to his leaders and colleagues at the senior and top level in the military.²⁴⁸

General Zhang's approach of improving the PLA's combat capabilities by engaging with foreign militaries came long before he was appointed Deputy Chief of General Staff. In 2001, he publicly advocated that the PLA needed to "integrate into the world to develop itself."²⁴⁹ Zhang pushed the PLA to revise its previous stance of being an onlooker or a hesitant participant in multilateral military forums.²⁵⁰ Under Zhang, the PLA started to actively engage in joint military exercises and dialogues with foreign militaries. Before Zhang participated in and gave a speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2007, no PLA representative had ever spoken at this forum except when attending panel discussions. In internal debates, Zhang was a staunch supporter of joint exercises with foreign militaries.²⁵¹ He personally led an unprecedentedly large joint military exercise, the Sino-Russian Peace Mission 2005, as the Chinese side's Chief of Staff. General Zhang also pushed through the establishment of a military hotline between the U.S. and China, despite strong resistance from within the PLA.²⁵² In 2011-12, General Zhang played a leadership role in China's efforts to strengthen maritime security, especially protection of its interests in the South China Sea.

Hu admired and trusted Zhang Qinsheng. However, the intimate relationship between Hu and Zhang did not help Zhang's career, but rather led to the stonewalling of Zhang by Chen Bingde, Chief of General Staff, and Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, the two CMC Vice Chairmen. "Who said the military doesn't have talents? I think Comrade Zhang Qinsheng is a good talent," Hu Jintao once remarked in front of Guo and Xu.²⁵³

This indelicate praise by Hu made others above Zhang resent Zhang even more. Due to Hu's weak control over the military, Zhang failed to be promoted into the CMC and was forced to retire in 2013.

By keeping a distanced relationship with the PLA leadership and not consulting the military on major foreign policy decisions, Hu was less often briefed on the details of the PLA's own development. This led to the military's varying levels of influence in different areas, spanning both foreign policy and the military's mandate. While having less direct influence in foreign policy areas, the PLA had increased autonomy in areas traditionally regarded as its core mandate, such as weapons development, testing and deployment, operational procedures, and enforcing previously established principles (such as the need to counter foreign military vessels' close-in surveillance). The PLA also relied on more indirect channels to influence the top leadership, such as influencing public opinion. On several occasions, the military was found to have stalled the implementation of policies Hu had devised and approved.

The Military Living in its Own Realm

Since the PLA leadership had a distant relationship with Hu Jintao, the military attempted to strengthen its influence by taking an indirect approach, primarily by trying to mold public opinion, stalling the implementation of policies, and acting uncooperatively with other policy-making actors.

Under Hu, the military faced growing pressure to justify its increasing budget from a much more outspoken society that was empowered by the Internet.²⁵⁴ Netizens, though diverse and largely unorganized, have entered the discourse in China's

increasingly diverse politics and have become important voices.²⁵⁵ China's political leaders and policy-makers have become forced to pay attention to strong opinions expressed by Netizens, as their opinions are sometimes "actionable" and lead to destabilizing protests. Hu was particularly sensitive to public opinion and Netizens, as he attempted to project himself as being different than Jiang by putting the Chinese public's interests first. This made Hu on some occasions even more sensitive to public pressure for the PLA to justify its budget than the PLA itself.

As a result of being put on the backburner, and having its armament development neglected in the 1980s, many younger military officers, without any deep personal bond with Deng Xiaoping, have become more vocal about this past injustice. In 2006, the GPD established a Foreign Propaganda Department ostensibly to strengthen the PLA's voice to the outside world,²⁵⁶ though in reality its target audience was domestic.²⁵⁷ The military news release mechanism and news spokesman system debuted during the Wenchuan earthquake disaster in 2008. By 2009, the PLA had established a group of 2,500 commentators who specialize in strengthening the military's voice in Internet forums and chat rooms.²⁵⁸

It is nearly impossible to authoritatively connect the PLA's organized efforts to influence the public media with its influence on the top leader regarding particular policies. However, one can look at certain instances and find an indirect link between the PLA officers' voices in the public domain and the decision-making of top leaders. One example was the rejection of the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' visit in 2010. In January 2010, the Obama administration announced the sale of US\$6 billion worth of Patriot anti-missile systems, helicopters, mine-sweeping ships, and communications

equipment to Taiwan. Public opinion in China strongly opposed these weapons sales, and military voices fanned these flames, intensifying such feelings.²⁵⁹ Rear Admiral Yang Yi, who had just stepped down from his position as Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at China's National Defense University, advocated "sanctioning American companies which benefit from the arms sales to Taiwan" and stated "it is time to discipline the Americans."²⁶⁰ Dai Xu, a star military commentator, though often dismissed by mainstream PLA officers, also commented that the government should "support Netizens' calls for sanctioning" American companies.²⁶¹

In actuality, the 2010 arms sales "constituted the second part of a package that was already announced at the end of the Bush administration."²⁶² Therefore, China had *already* punished the U.S. with various sanctions, including cutting off military-to-military ties with the U.S. in 2001, when the announcement was first made. The GSD Foreign Affairs Office clearly understood that by punishing the U.S. for the 2010 arms sales to Taiwan, China would be punishing the same act twice.²⁶³ The MFA also understood this point, and therefore when the U.S. State Department inquired about Secretary Gates' planned visit that year, the MFA insisted that everything would proceed as normal. That was also the MFA's logic when it wrote President Hu's talking points for the second round of the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) held in May 2010, in which the MFA briefed Hu that if U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asked about Secretary Gates' upcoming visit, Hu should agree to it. During the S&ED, Secretary Clinton did inquire about the visit and Hu did not respond. The MFA at this point understood Hu's thinking and never extended the invitation to Secretary Gates, surprising the U.S. State Department.²⁶⁴

Not all public commentary provided by active-duty and retired military officers in the media has the PLA's blessing. "Most of those military commentators, who frequently appear on public media, cater to public opinion and do not play a role in the decision-making of the PLA," according to an official from the GSD's Foreign Liaison Office.²⁶⁵ This comment may be too dismissive toward the influence of military voices in the public domain. Nonetheless, there is some truth to this assessment: those military officers who provide commentary in China's public domain often do not represent mainstream military thinking. Moreover, military officers, once retired, do not have a seat at the table during the decision-making process and are rarely granted a chance to weigh in on policies internally. The dilemma is that the media likes role-playing – military officers are supposed to take a tough position on policies. According to a retired PLA officer, "If you speak with a gentle tone on policies, you will be soon forgotten by the public. Instead, if you speak toughly, you will be more easily remembered and applauded in the public media."²⁶⁶ The influence of active-duty and retired PLA officers' opinions voiced publicly is hard to quantify. However, it certainly mounted to a level that Hu personally reprimanded and sent warnings to several outspoken officers in 2012-13, instructing them not to speak publicly as this might hijack the government's policy.²⁶⁷

As Hu significantly reduced the military's ability to directly advise him on policies and decreased the military's representation on policy-making bodies, some military officers quietly complained about Hu's insufficient consultation with the PLA. As a result, senior active-duty officers occasionally made comments that contradicted the government's existing policy and caused foreign countries to worry. Two examples illustrate this pattern: General Xiong Guangkai's public statements in 2007 on China's

Taiwan policy; and the PLA's disagreement with the government on the threat presented by the U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises in the Yellow Sea in 2010.

General Xiong Guangkai, who had retired from his position as Deputy Chief of General Staff but remained active by holding the Chairmanship of the China Association of International Strategy, made a comment on China's Taiwan policy in 2007 that strayed from the government's officially publicized policy. Xiong emphasized "the mainland has not given up the method of use of force" on Taiwan and "if Taiwan shows *any sign* of attempting to become independent, the Mainland has to use non-peaceful means to solve the problem" (emphasis author's own).²⁶⁸ China's bottom line as explained by Xiong was inconsistent with the ASL. According to Article Eight of the ASL, "in the event that the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the *fact* of Taiwan's secession from China," (emphasis author's own) China will employ "non-peaceful means...to protect China's (its) sovereignty and territorial integrity."²⁶⁹

Such inconsistency in public statements on policies was demonstrated again in 2009-10, when disagreements on how to respond to U.S. military exercises in the Yellow Sea arose between the civilian foreign affairs system and the PLA. The positioning in official statements might be unnoticeable to casual observers, but the underlying civil-military contradictions on this issue were clear. China's civilian foreign affairs system used much calmer words, while the PLA took an unambiguously hardline and indignant stance toward the U.S. exercises. Dai Bingguo, State Councilor on foreign affairs, first in meetings in July 2009 and then in an article he published in 2010 entitled "Adhering to the Path of Peaceful Development," clarified China's three core interests: "China's form

of government, political system and political stability; China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity; and basic guarantee for China's sustainable economic and social development."²⁷⁰ Dai emphasized, "the Taiwan question constitutes China's core interest concerning its unification and territorial integrity" but omitted China's interest in the Yellow Sea in his recitation of China's core interests.²⁷¹ This deliberate omission would later speak volumes during China's strong reaction to the U.S. holding joint military exercises with South Korea in July 2010, which greatly antagonized the PLA.

Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of General Staff, stated that China "very much opposed" such exercises. PLA officers' unconstrained criticisms and protests in Chinese media were much louder and unequivocal than those of Ma.²⁷² However, throughout the PLA's harsh reaction toward the U.S.-South Korea joint exercises, the MFA never clarified specifically whether the Yellow Sea is one of China's core interests.²⁷³ Although there were disagreements even within the PLA on the Yellow Sea question,²⁷⁴ the PLA in general agreed on lodging such strong protests against the U.S.-led exercises because of an internal consensus that the U.S. conclusion on the Cheonan Incident²⁷⁵ was questionable and therefore could not be used as the basis for the U.S.-South Korea military exercises.²⁷⁶

Both General Xiong's comments regarding China's Taiwan policy and General Ma's comment regarding the Yellow Sea influenced Chinese public opinion and created confusion about China's foreign policy. On the one hand, such comments indicate a wider range of opinions inside the PLA, and that probably every policy position crystallizes as a result of internal debates and disagreements. On the other hand, the PLA is bolder in expressing its opinions, even though such opinions often contradict the

MFA's. The PLA's commentary has caused a surge of nationalism on some critical issues, and has also generated public support for the PLA's position, which in some instances changed the foundation for decision-making.

A third way that the PLA can exert relative power is to stall the implementation of an established policy, not consult with other bureaucratic actors, or omit important intelligence/information in order to exclude other policy actors when seeking approval for certain actions. For instance, David M. Lampton has quoted a senior member of the civilian foreign affairs system as remarking that during the EP-3 Incident the MFA was in the dark and had to get its information from the PLA. This put Hu Jintao, then Vice President and Jiang's designated successor, and Vice Premier Qian Qichen in "difficult positions" and led to "mistakes."²⁷⁷

The failure to launch U.S.-China nuclear talks, despite Hu Jintao's agreement with President Bush in 2006 to do so, was one example of the PLA's stalling behavior. During Hu Jintao's visit to the U.S. in April 2006, President Bush proposed nuclear talks between the two countries. In June, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman discussed inviting Jing Zhiyuan, the Commander of the PLA Second Artillery Force, to the U.S., and in October General James Cartwright, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Forces, sent a formal invitation to General Jing to visit the U.S. Strategic Command headquarters. Despite Hu's prior agreement to such nuclear talks, the PLA declined to set a date for a dialogue on nuclear policy, strategy, and doctrine.²⁷⁸ Instead, General Jing went on an extensive trip of Latin America.²⁷⁹ Commander Jing failed to meet Hu's commitment for a variety of reasons, but what is notable is that he got away with it without suffering any repercussions from Hu.²⁸⁰

The 2007 anti-satellite (ASAT) test was an example of the PLA's holding-back or omitting intelligence/information critical to decision-making under Hu. On January 11 2007, the PLA used a ground-based missile to hit and destroy one of its aging satellites orbiting in space.²⁸¹ The GAD oversees China's military space program,²⁸² and as such it conducted a debris assessment before and after the test but chose not to report the results to the CMC or Hu.²⁸³ As the damage assessment prior to the ASAT test was unfavorable and could call into question the decision to conduct such a test or invite new policy actors into the decision-making process,²⁸⁴ officers who oversaw this task force withheld this assessment and it never reached Hu's desk.²⁸⁵ China's twelve-day silence immediately after the test caused extensive speculation about civil-military friction in China. The fact that Chen Bingde, who was then the Chief of the GAD (2005-September 2007), was not punished but was in fact promoted to Chief of General Staff (2007-13), is a telling example of such behavior going unpunished under Hu and how the PLA was able to increase its relative power by creating facts on the ground.

The J-20 Incident has often been raised as another example of the PLA creating facts on the ground, though a closer look leads one to conclude that other actors, in this case a defense contractor, are also able to skillfully maneuver the PLA's sheer strength to create facts on the ground. During U.S. Secretary of Defense Bob Gates' visit to China in 2011, China conducted a test flight of the J-20, China's fifth-generation stealth fighter, just hours before Hu Jintao was to meet with Gates. Hu and other non-military officials were evidently unaware of this test flight when Gates directly raised a question about it during their meeting. Hu and his aides, most likely, approved the J-20 test flight but did not connect the dots.²⁸⁶ If one looks closely at this incident, two conclusions can be

drawn. First, weapon testing follows an approval procedure independent of that of military diplomacy. The date of the J-20 flight test was set before Secretary Gates' visit, which was taken to mend frayed Sino-U.S. relations. The PLA did not intend to deliberately insult Gates.²⁸⁷ Second, the incident was created when, more likely, China's defense industry, more specifically the Chengdu Aircraft Design Institute (Institute 611), publicized the test photos at a sensitive moment to create a sensational impact and secure its project. Chinese bloggers publicized news of the test flights, as well as photos that were probably shot by test flight technicians.²⁸⁸

Given how quickly the J-20 test flights were publicized, it is reasonable to conclude that this was a planned roll-out by the developer of this stealth fighter, Institute 611.²⁸⁹ Institute 611 won this highly prestigious project in a competitive bidding process.²⁹⁰ Institute 611's motivation may have resulted from the decision of its main competitor, Institute 601, with a longer history in designing fighter jets, to continue developing a rival to the J-20 with its own funding after failing to secure the contract from the PLA. Institute 611, perhaps feeling insecure, may have been motivated to enhance its reputation by leaking the photos of the J-20 test flight in order to firm up the PLA's order of J-20s.²⁹¹ As China's defense industry is no longer affiliated with the PLA in a strict sense, the J-20 Incident was, at best, an example of non-PLA actors creating facts on the ground to sway the PLA's procurement decisions.²⁹²

Under Hu, the PLA became much more insulated and uncooperative in its relationship with the MFA, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Suffice it to say that Hu's weak control of the military exacerbated this tendency. As the PLA leadership had scarce opportunities to access Hu, Hu had little chance to directly address these inter-

agency coordination issues. Therefore, many PLA officers in the internal decision-making chain did their best to avoid having to consult with the MFA. As one senior PLAN officer stated, “If I ask for the MFA’s opinion and they say no to a certain action, I would have to consider their opinion and pay the price if I decide to carry on, especially if something goes wrong. Therefore, I’d better not ask what they think if I want to go ahead with some action.”²⁹³

As a political leader with weak control over the military, Hu did not trust the PLA and tried to shrink the space in policy-making where the military leadership could exert influence, as those military officers who would voice their opinion during the policy-making process would have been those who evidently failed to swear allegiance to Hu. By doing so, Hu became distanced from the PLA leadership. With its influence weakened, the PLA leadership tried other ways to influence foreign and security policies, by inserting its voice to influence public opinion, articulating its opinion even when it contradicted Hu’s policies, stalling in the implementation of policies Hu advocated, and shunning the MFA and moving alone on certain actions. In the end, this indirect approach did not allow the PLA to fundamentally influence or change any of the major policies during Hu’s era. Rather, the PLA created a countervailing force that made it more difficult for Hu to implement his policies.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the dynamics of Party-military relations and the military’s influence during the decision-making process. The PLA’s unique importance to the Party in the long history of the Party-military relationship created the organic separation

between the PLA and the government, one of the root causes of the unequal positions of the PLA and MFA and the inherent civilian-military divide on foreign and security policies.

This chapter introduced two concepts in order to understand what impacts the PLA's influence in policies through the Party-military framework: Political Reliance and Effective Control. Without the top Party leader's political reliance on the PLA, the leader's effective control over the military would translate to the PLA having a very minimal influence on politics and policies. However, if the top Party leader needs the PLA's support (existence of political reliance) and intends to strengthen his effective control, he would be forced to allow the PLA to have more influence on policies. The top Party leader would be incentivized to plant PLA officers he trusts into the policy-making process in order to augment his overall control over policies. Whether these officers, empowered with access and influence, would help the top leader seize and consolidate control over the PLA would depend on their own strength and the strength of their opposition in the military. On the other hand, the top Party leader would have to share power with the PLA in order to garner and sustain its support.

Deng's period forms a strong contrast with the post-Deng era in terms of the Party leader's political reliance on the military. The PLA, distracted and broken after decades of political campaigns, cruel infighting, and the 913 Incident, needed Deng to hold it together and direct it onto the path of fundamental reform. Deng was relentless in pushing the military back to the barracks and suppressing the PLA's parochial interests such as an increased budget and heightened political representation. Deng also appointed non-military officials to run the military, who acted as a natural blockade against

resistance and the institutional interests of the PLA. Under Deng, the PLA's autonomy and influence in policy-making were suppressed to a very low level, except on the Taiwan issue, which had been a part of the PLA's domain and under its purview since 1949. While a strongly motivated PLA officer advocated for the 1988 Naval Clash with Vietnam, it was initiated by the civilian leader whom Deng trusted and claimed to have transferred power to.

After the end of Deng's era, the Party leader in general had difficulty establishing effective control over the military. Obstacles came not only from the lack of natural understanding between political and military leaders, due to a lack of shared past and expertise, but also from the PLA's deepening professionalization, which has made the military further set in its own ways. However, the top leader's biggest obstacle in establishing effective control over the military was previous CMC chairmen's lingering influence and continued political interference. As a result, the top leader's control over the military, if ever established, is personalized despite the increasing institutionalization and collectiveness – consensus-building characteristics – of China's top political leadership.

Whether the Party's top leader can effectively control the PLA significantly impacts his trust and confidence in the military. Without effective control over the military, the top leader would be incentivized to confine and shrink the military's role in China's political process, including its policy-making process. The degree to which the top leader exercises effective control is decisive in determining the PLA's overall access to the top leader and the extent of the PLA's influence in policy areas. This does not suggest that the PLA leadership is always driven to voice its preference, rather it only

means that the effective control the top leader exerts, and therefore the trust he builds in the PLA, determines the PLA's access to the top leader, which is the only vehicle by which the PLA has the opportunity to voice its opinions directly to the top leader.

¹ Deng's era started in December 1978, when his position as the Party's paramount leader was clearly established. The end of Deng's era and the start of Jiang's era are not so neatly demarcated, but generally coincide with Deng's resignation as CMC Chairman in November 1989. Yet, Deng maintained substantial influence in China's major foreign policy areas until at least 1993, if not later. Thus, it took Jiang at least four years (1989-93) to consolidate his power in the military.

² David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 61-3.

³ Deng's ranking in the PBSC only moved up to the second position, after Ye Jianying resigned all of his positions in 1986.

⁴ Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking in China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 162.

⁵ A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China* (Boulder: Westview, 1985), p. 12. Ezra Vogel also drew this conclusion, noting, "The elderly Marshal Ye took little part in the actual work. Chen Yun and Li Xiannian expressed their views on major issues, but the daily party decision-making was largely in the hands of Deng, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang." Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 380.

⁶ The political power landscape in China can be divided into two periods: 1982-6, and 1987-92. In the first period, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun had a fundamental consensus on economic and political policies, reflected by the later formulized policy of "one center and two basic points," which was basically to launch economic reforms while maintaining China's political system and the Party's ideology. Deng was dominant in economic and political policies, while Chen was dominant in organization and personnel affairs. Yang Jisheng, a veteran journalist, labeled this the period of "twin-peak" politics, with Deng heading the reformist camp (which included Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Wan Li, Hu Qili, Xi Zhongxun, Li Chang, Zhou Yang, Qiao Shi, Xiang Nan, Ren Zhongyi, and Tian Jiyun), and Chen leading the conservative camp (which included Li Xiannian, Song Renqiong, Yao Yilin, Song Ping, Wang Zhen, Yu Qiuli, Hu Qiaomu, and Deng Liqun). During this period, political power was carried out through consensus-building, while elders intervened in policies through their roles on the Central Advisory Committee, though Deng and Chen had decisive voices. In the second period, Deng's role as essentially the core of the second CCP leadership was established by an unannounced but important resolution passed by the 1st Plenary of the 13th National Congress of the Party held in 1987. A seven-member committee that was dedicated to work personnel issues for the 13th National Congress of the Party (led by Bo Yibo, with members including Yang Shangkun, Wang Zhen, Yao Yilin, Song Renqiong, Gao Yang and Wu Xiuquan) decided that the PBSC could not have several "mothers-in-law" and that Deng Xiaoping should be the only "mother-in-law" above the PBSC. This personnel committee also made a decision and implemented the decision of full retirement of Peng Zhen and the half-retirements of Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun and Li Xiannian, who then all lost their seats on the PBSC. Therefore, all other elders' powers of interventions were officially abolished and only Deng's was kept, meaning Deng having the final say, i.e., the power of making final decision (*zuihou paibanquan*). In the 13th National Congress of the Party, a formal but publicly unannounced resolution was passed, which was orally reiterated by Zhao Ziyang: "in major policies, Comrade Deng Xiaoping would be consulted and invited to make the final decision (*paiban*)." Essentially, Deng was the helmsman in deciding the most important issues in China; Deng had to be informed on all major policies. In the following years Deng continued to consult other elders, primarily Chen Yun, but including Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, Yang Shangkun, Deng Yingchao and Wang Zhen, exemplified in the decision-making during the June 4th Incident in 1989. This consensus-building practice was a result of Deng's personal style rather than official opinion of the Party. See Du Daozheng (former Director of China's General Administration of Press and Publications), *Du Daozheng's Diary: What Else Zhao Ziyang Said* (Hong Kong: *tiandi tushu gongsi*, 2010), pp. 24-34; Bao Pu, Renee Chiang and Adi Ignatius ed. and trans., *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (London/New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), pp. 29-56 and 198-203;

Xu Qingquan, "CCP 'Eight Elders' in New and Old Transitions," *guojia renwen dili zazhi*, 12 (2014), available at: <http://www.21ccom.net/plus/wapview.php?aid=119040>; Yang Jisheng, *Zhongguo gaige niandai de zhengzhi douzheng* (Political Struggles during the Reform in China in the Era of Reform) (Hong Kong: *zhuoyue wenhua*, 2004), pp. 25-34; Leng Rong and Wang Zuoling (eds.), *Deng Xiaoping Nian Pu (1975-1997)* (Beijing: *zhongyang wenxian chubanshe*, 2004), p. 1167.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Most military trainings had been suspended by the end of the Cultural Revolution. Only one third of the PLA units still underwent so-called "full military trainings" in the 1970s while those with "full military trainings" spent 90 days out of a year in full-time military training and those with "half military trainings" spent 45 days out of a year in full-time military training. See interview with Lu Jibing, a retired officer who used to serve in the 38th Army Corps, from the documentary "How Deng Xiaoping Chose the Military in His Reforms", Phoenix Satellite TV, January 30, 2013.

⁹ See "Hua Guofeng Listed Jiang Qing's Crimes," *History channel of the website of People's Daily*, February 7, 2014, <http://history.people.com.cn/n/2014/0207/c372327-24291626.html>. Also, after the 913 Lin Biao Incident in 1971, seven out of 21 Politburo members, elected by the 9th Party Congress, were listed as part of the anti-Party clique, almost all PLA officers. In the list of 93 senior cadres whom were believed to be implicated by the 913 Incident, 92 cadres were eventually arrested. See Wang Dongya, "Li Desheng, the Last Politburo Standing Committee Members Elected in the Cultural Revolution," *feng huang zhou kan*, Issue 16 of 2011.

¹⁰ Soon after the Cultural Revolution started, the PLA replaced the shattered Party and government structure and in reality became the supreme political and administrative authority in China's provinces. See Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army in the Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Intervention," *Current Scene* (Hong Kong), Vol. VIII, No. 18 (7 December 1970), 1-25.

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¹² A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China* (Boulder: Westview, 1985), pp. 96-97.

¹³ Li Jinming, "How Deng Xiaoping Decided on Cutting A Million Troops?," *Xiangchao Magazine* 9 (2009), available at http://www.21ccom.net/articles/ljsd/article_201001204051.html.

¹⁴ Jiang Tingyu, *Our Troops Marching towards the Sun* (Beijing: dangjian duwu chubanshe, 2007). An electronic version of the relevant chapter could be found in Xinhua News Agency's website, http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2010-05/31/content_13596148.htm.

¹⁵ In the meeting of the Party Committee of the Railway Corps in February 1982, Deng's order of cutting both the Railway Corps and Engineering Corps was announced. The Party Committee of the Railway Corps, composed of officers above the arms corps level, appealed to Deng not to abolish the Railway Corps. Qin Jiwei, then Commander of Beijing Military Region, also advised Deng to integrate each division of the Railway Corps into each military region. However, Deng was determined to abolish the Railway Corps. In December 1982, 200,000 troops of the PLA Railway Corps were demobilized. See Li Jinming, "Cutting A Million Troops?".

¹⁶ Deng raised the target of cutting 1.5 million personnel of the PLA in 1975. The PLA's personnel peaked to 6.56 million during the Cultural Revolution. Since Deng's order of cutting the military personnel in 1975, the PLA shrank but then swelled again, which reached 5.99 million in 1980. By then, Deng issued an order again to cut the PLA personnel to 4.5 million. In 1984, Deng laid out the new target of cutting the PLA personnel to 3 million. See Song Yijun, "Deng Xiaoping Sharpening the Sword in 10 years: Streamlining the PLA in 1975 to Cut-a-million in 1985," *dang shi wen yuan* 9 (2014), available at <http://www.xatdj.com/news-11231-24.html>.

¹⁷ Additionally, the PLA's defense budget as a percentage of total government expenditures, which indicates the extent to which the Party prioritizes defense over other needs, dropped to 9.5 percent after 1985. In comparison, China's defense budget at the time of its 1979 war against Vietnam accounted for 20 percent of its national budget, and during the Korean War its defense budget was 40 percent of total government expenditures. The PLA's nominal budget fell by 14.95 percent from 1979 to 1980, even though the PLA's warfighting against Vietnam has lasted from 1979 to 1991.

¹⁸ Xu Yan, "Historic Evolution of PRC's Defense Budget," *zhong guo guo fang bao*, January 18, 2011.

¹⁹ In comparison, the index in 1979-83 was 130.1, 106.8, 90.4, 93.1 and 92.2. His calculation was based on China's Statistics Yearbook in 1989. See Chen Bingfu, "Economic Analysis of China's Defense Budget In The Past 10 Years," *jing ji gong zuo yan jiu*, March 1990.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping's Selected Works (1975-1982)*, Volume 2, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1984), pp. 416 and 417.

²² Deng Xiaoping, "Talk with a delegation from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry," *People's Daily*, March 4, 1985, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1330.html>.

²³ Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping's Selected Works (1982-1992)*, Volume 3, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1994), pp. 131-3.

²⁴ COSTIND carried out the feasibility study on aircraft carrier and carrier-borne aircrafts in 1989, coded as Project "891". Qin Jiwei, then Defense Minister, Ding Henggao, Director of COSTIND and son-in-law of Marshal Nie Rongzhen, Li Xu'e, Minister of Aeronautics all supported the aircraft carrier project. However, the CMC decided against the aircraft carrier project for lack of funding. This message was conveyed by Chi Haotian, then PLA Chief of General Staff, to Liu Huaqing. Yang Shangkun, CMC Vice Chairman, further expressed the need for "one or two aircraft carrier", but "now is not the right time" and the task "shall be left to the next generation." See Yu Wei, "Birth of China's Strategic Plan on Aircraft Carrier," *dang shi zong heng* 12 (2012), <http://mall.cnki.net/magazine/Article/DSZH201212006.htm>.

²⁵ Senior military officers such as Zhang Aiping, Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen strongly opposed the policy of providing insufficiently for the PLA's building and allowing the military to make money to feed itself on the market. See, Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*. James Mulvenon and Tai Ming Cheung both have written extensively about the subject of the PLA Inc. See James C. Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), pp. 121-123; and Tai Ming Cheung, *China's Entrepreneurial Army* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 140-145.

²⁶ Ding Dong, "Zhang Aiping Opposed Military Running Business," *liao wang*, December 20, 2013, <http://news.takungpao.com/mainland/outlook/q/2013/1220/2144177.html>.

²⁷ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

²⁸ Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*.

²⁹ Zhang Aiping, "Strengthen military Modernization: commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Army Day", *People's Daily*, July 24, 1987, p. 1.

³⁰ See Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, pp. 124-27; Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 630-2.

³¹ Zhang Aiping told his son that "it was a grave dereliction of responsibility for the government to allow the military to operate business". See Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*.

³² This conclusion is based on interviews with numerous PLA officers in 2010-14. Most confessed that despite the professional soldiers' disagreements, few dared to voice their oppositions publicly. Some retired officers wrote letters to the CMC and the Party Center, but these voices were ignored by Deng.

³³ Interview with Ambassador Wu Jianmin, a retired diplomat and former President of the University of Foreign Affairs Ambassador, and Ambassador Shi Yanhua, Deng's former interpreter in 1980s, Washington DC, 2012. Wu explained the similar point in an article. See Wu Jianmin, "Gai ge Kaifang yu Xiaoping Tongzhi de Yige Zhongda Panduan" (Reforms and Opening up and an Important Judgment of Comrade Xiaoping), *Beijing Ribao (Beijing Daily)*, March 31, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2008-03/31/content_7888008.htm.

³⁴ News report, *Central Daily News*, Air Mail Edition, May 14, 1987, 1, quoted in David Wen-Wei Chang and Richard Y. Chuang, *The Politics of Hong Kong's Reversion to China* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 30.

³⁵ Li Xiannian, "Speech on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Meeting", March 1, 1984, in Zheng Zhensheng, "Li Xiannian yu Xianggang Aomen Huigui" (Li Xiannian and Reunification of Hong Kong and Macao), *Dang De Wenxian (Literature of the CCP)*, June 1999, p. 38.

³⁶ In May 1984, Geng Biao, former Defense Minister and CMC Secretary General (1979-82), commented to journalists that China would not station troops in Hong Kong which enraged Deng. See Li Yigen, "Deng Xiaoping Furious about the Incident on the PLA Garrison," *Jin wan bao*, April 16, 2012.

³⁷ The CMC meeting was attended by heads of General Politics Department, General Logistics Department, Deputy Chief of General Staff, Deputy Director of CMC Office and officers of GSD Operational Department. See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 688-91.

³⁸ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 690; Liu Zhenwu, "Liu Huaqing's Devotion to the Building of the (Hong Kong) Garrison Troops and the Return of Hong Kong to the Motherland," *junshi lishi* 6 (2011); Li Chun, "Liu Huaqing: When Necessary, Hammer Would Fall and the PLA Would Enter Hong Kong By Use of Force," *lian he bao*, November 24, 2014, pp. A-13, <http://city.udn.com/50248/1088343>.

³⁹ Deng Xiaoping once explicitly expressed: "If we couldn't take Hong Kong back, any of Chinese leaders and governments could neither justify (that result) to the Chinese people, nor to the world. If (Hong Kong) cannot be taken back (in 1997), that means Chinese government is (like) the government in late Qing Dynasty and Chinese leader is (like) Li Hongzhang! We waited for (the solution of the Hong Kong transfer for) 33 years, plus 15 years (of negotiations with British), which is together 48 years. We could only wait so long on the ground that our people fully trust (our capability to take it back). If we still cannot (take back Hong Kong) in 15 years, our people will no long have the reason to trust us. (In that circumstance,) any Chinese government has to rescind the power and automatically leaves the political scene. There is no other choice!" See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 688.

⁴⁰ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 688-91.

⁴¹ Liu Huaqing, "Renmin Jiefangjun Jinzhu Xianggang De Juece Neimu" (The Inside Story of the Decision to Station the PLA to Hong Kong"), *Zhongguo Zuoqia* (Chinese Writers), vol. 19, 2006, p. 17.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Liu Huaqing, "Renmin Jiefangjun Jinzhu Xianggang De Juece Neimu", p. 17.

⁴⁴ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 688-91.

⁴⁵ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 688-91.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Dimbleby, *The Last Governor: Chris Patten and the Handover of Hong Kong* (London, UK: Littel, Brown and Company, 1997), pp. 216-7.

⁴⁷ Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, pp. 29-275.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ David M. Lampton explained the more "muscular" inclinations of Zhou Nan, Vice Foreign Minister. Zhou and Lu Ping, Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office took a more combative stance in the Sino-British negotiations, compared to Xu Jiatur, Director of the Xinhua News Agency who was closer to Zhao Ziyang. See Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 116-7.

⁵⁰ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 527.

⁵¹ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2014.

⁵² Han Yong, "Past Events about Liu Huaqing".

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Li Shuwen concluded that "the decision to open fire (initiating war-fighting) is in the hands of the CMC, but the decision of firing back is in the Fleet." See Han Yong, "Past Events about Liu Huaqing"; "China Must Have Aircraft Carrier: Interview with General Chen Weiwen on Naval Clash in South China Sea," *xian dai jian chuan* (Modern Ships), December 22, 2011, <http://news.qq.com/a/20111222/000468.htm>.

⁵⁵ Part of the oppositions was expressed as "why making so many troubles to China's diplomacy by occupying several remote islands and reefs where nothing grows". Interview with Li Shuwen, in Han Yong, "Past Events about Liu Huaqing". Also, the author's interviews with several PLAN officers, 2013-2014.

⁵⁶ One of the key disagreements was whether one of the orders -- "no provocation" -- was executed. It was a general rule that the PLA could only fight back after the enemy fires the first shot. In this incident, the PLA compelled the Vietnamese soldiers which led to an accidental shot by Vietnamese soldier. The orders to the frontline PLA soldiers include: drive the Vietnamese off the island China claims; no provocation; no first shot; no imposed on (no loss). These orders were hard to execute altogether; Interviews with several senior PLA officers, both from the Navy and the GSD, Beijing and Guangzhou, 2009-14.

⁵⁷ Li Chuqun, Political Commissar of PLA Ship 502, cut the rope of Vietnamese military ship HQ604 which was attempting to land in Chigua Island. The PLA Navy then tried to seize the Vietnamese flag put on the disputed Chigua Island, which resulted in physical fights with Vietnamese soldiers. While Yang Zhiliang tried to block a Vietnamese soldier pointing his gun to Du Xianghou, the Vietnamese soldier fired a shot to Yang. See "Interview with General Chen Weiwen," *xian dai jian chuan* (Modern Ships).

Therefore, the dispute within the PLA centered on questions: whether the Vietnamese military was compelled and provoked by the PLA and if so, whether this behavior was in line with the order of “no provocation” by the CMC. Second, another issue of internal dispute was whether the accidental firing by the Vietnamese soldier constituted a justified cause for the PLA to shoot back and in this incident sink the Vietnamese ships HQ604, 605 and 505.

⁵⁸ Admiral Liu Huaqing, Deputy Secretary General of the CMC, ordered the Operations Department of GSD to give direct orders of “take whatever islands they could get on” and taking captives. Liu sat through the rest of the Chigua battle at the Naval Operations Commanding HQ.

⁵⁹ There are certainly grey areas overlapping the two periods.

⁶⁰ In 1991 and 1993, the Party required combat troops below the level of army corps to withdraw from the marketplace. However, neither order was effectively implemented. In July 1998, the Party center announced that the PLA and PAP were no longer allowed to conduct any business activity. The transfer of the PLA-run businesses to local governments and the delinking of the PLA with any business enterprise was officially completed by the end of 1998. See Hu Shuli and Cao Haili, ed., *Detonation Starts in 1998*, (Beijing: shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1999).

⁶¹ Goldman wrote “most observers considered Jiang a transitional figure. He had no political constituency and few real accomplishments. The major reason for his appointment was that as party leader of Shanghai he had nothing to do with the bloody events in Beijing.” See Merle Goldman, “The Man Without Qualities,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1999. Many of Chinese observers held the similar view. Liu Binyan said: “we -- not just me but a substantial number of people --...didn’t expect Jiang Zemin would rule for 13 years smoothly.” See Wei Cheng, “Jiang Zemin’s 13-year-long Legacy,” *BBC (Chinese)*, July 22, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_2130000/newsid_2139500/2139595.stm.

⁶² Deng vigorously resisted changing China’s “one focus” on economic development into “two focuses” on economic development and anti-capitalistic liberalization — the latter of which was a goal the conservative camp headed by Chen Yun, Li Peng, and Deng Liqun, tried to push through. See Yang Jisheng, “Deng Xiaoping’s Last Strike: Retrospect in 20 years After Deng’s Southern Tour”, *zhongguo jingying bao*, February 1, 2012.

⁶³ Both Vogel and Yang documented Chen Yun’s disagreement with Deng on the establishment of a special economic zone in Shanghai. See Yang Jisheng, *Political Struggles*; Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, pp. 666-8.

⁶⁴ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, pp. 666-8

⁶⁵ Yang Shangkun said in the public speech: “Reform will have risk but it is a risk we can manage. There is no way out (for China) if we choose to stop and even back off from the reform.” See Stories of Yang Shangkun’s revolutionary career, *CCP News Net*, October 5, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-10/05/content_6831740_2.htm.

⁶⁶ Moreover, Yang’s speech did not mention Jiang at all, which was unusual, given the fact that Jiang formally held the position of the CMC Chairman. See Yang Shangkun’s speech on commemorating the 80th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution, October 9, 1991, *People’s Daily*, <http://xhgmwswbwg.minge.gov.cn/xhbnhz/ldjh/312.shtml>.

⁶⁷ Yang Jisheng pointed out that Deng’s Southern Tour did involve potential security risks to Deng, but “Deng, not the CMC Chairman, had Yang Shangkun and his brother, who were in control of the military and supported Deng.” See Yang Jisheng, “*Deng Xiaoping’s last strike*.”

⁶⁸ The collapse of the Soviet Union on December 25 of 1991, a historic event in so many ways, also led to a substantial polarization in the policy debates among the Chinese leadership. It gave greater impetus to the conservatives afraid of the consequences of Deng’s rapid economic growth and opening up program. Jiang Zemin was pressured by the Elders including Li Xiannian, Chen Yun and conservative ideologues such as Deng Liqun, to side with them. Jiang held 11 internal debates participated by dozens of economists and officials from Foreign Ministry from October to December of 1991 to lay out options as to how China should respond to events in the Soviet Union. The overwhelming conclusion of these discussions in late 1991 supported further reform and opening up. However, Jiang publicly kept silent.

⁶⁹ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, p. 677.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Han Wenfu, *Deng Xiaoping Biography*, pp. 863-4.

⁷² Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, p. 680; Jiang Huaxuan, Zhang Weiping and Xiao Sheng, ed, *Chronology of CCP Important Meetings (1921-2001)*, (Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001), pp. 515-6.

⁷³ On June 9, Jiang gave a speech at the Central Party School laying out the three options for China's economic policy and gave his personal preference for developing a "socialist market economy". Jiang's advisors later indicated that Jiang gave this speech after consulting with Deng. This formed the basis of the policy formally presented in the 14th National Congress of the CCP three months later. Deng's political success in 1992 was also reflected by the selection of several critical leadership positions in the same year. First, Zhu Rongji became the successor to conservative Li Peng. Second, Hu Jintao was named as heir apparent to Jiang. As such, both Zhu and Hu managed to enter the ranks of the Politburo Standing Committee, replacing conservatives Yao Yilin and Song Ping. Furthermore, the CCP Advisory Committee where conservatives concentrated was abolished.

⁷⁴ Editorial "Protect economic reform and opening up", *PLA Daily*, March 14, 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Through a work report on the 5th meeting of the 7th National People's Congress, Yang Baibing reiterated the promise that "the PLA will firmly and consistently support, participate and protect economic reform and opening up." See Editorial "Protect Economic Reform and Opening-up", *PLA Daily*. Then in July 1992, Yang published an article in the *People's Daily*, which emphasized that the PLA "has raised its banner and promises to protect and enforce the spirit of Comrade Deng Xiaoping's speech... in the military" and the PLA "firmly opposed any ideas or actions that deviated from the Party's basic line" See Yang Baibing, "Raise Banner and Promises to Protect," *People's Daily*, July 29, 1992, p. 2.

⁷⁶ "Protection" for Economic Reform and Opening-up," *People's Daily*, August 1, 1992, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Interview with a PLA officer at Guangzhou Military Region, Guangzhou, January 2013.

⁷⁸ Historians have yet to answer the question of why Deng removed the Yang brothers after they provided him with the strong military support that he needed given his weakened political standing after 1989, which in turn helped him win a major victory for his policies. This episode demonstrated a complicated political negotiation, much of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁷⁹ Du Daozheng, *Du Daozheng Diary*, p. 166; also interview with Du Daozheng. See Jiang Yehu, "Yang Shangkun's Plan Fell Out: Xiao Ke, Yang Yong and Zhang Aiping All Opposed Him," *Mingjing Monthly* 4 (2010), p. 319, <http://www.wpoforum.com/viewnews.php?gid=8&nid=42284>.

⁸⁰ Zhao Ziyang, quoted by Du Daozheng, one of Zhao's former aids, in a conversation on June 2, 1993. Du Daozheng, *Du Daozheng Diary*.

⁸¹ Zhang Aiping recommended his former subordinate Zhang Zhen, then President of National Defense University, to replace Yang Baibing. See Ye Maozhi, "CCP History May Be Rewritten If Zeng Qinghong Didn't Help Jiang Zemin Challenge the Army of Yang Family," *xin shiji*, June 10, 2012, http://www.mingjinglishi.com/2012_05_11_archive.html; also probably more convincingly, Zhao Ziyang confirmed Zhang's opposition to Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing. See Zhao Ziyang, quoted by Du Daozheng, one of Zhao's former aids, in a conversation on June 2, 1993. Du Daozheng, *Du Daozheng Diary*.

⁸² Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), p. 220. In Kuhn's description, Zeng Qinghong managed to arrange a meeting with Deng's son that the Yang brothers were undermining the principle that the Party must rule the army and hinted that a military coup was not out of the question.

⁸³ Peng Zhen was close to He Long personally. However, his opposition to Yang Shangkun indicated that loyalty cannot be easily transferred in the military. In this case, Peng Zhen's close relationship with He Long could not be automatically transformed into his support for He Long's nephew's brother-in-law. The loyalty forged by fighting together in real battles and political struggles is much more solid than relationship forged through marriages and family ties.

⁸⁴ Ye Maozhi, "CCP History May Be Rewritten".

⁸⁵ Swaine had extensive discussions about the power base of Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing. See Swaine, *Military and Political Succession in China*, pp. VII-9, 60-69, 176-182. The Yang brothers have marriage-based bonds with Marshal He Long, Liao Hansheng, former Political Commissar of Beijing and Nanjing Military Region, and General Xiao Ke. Liao was brother-in-law of Yang Shangkun and nephew of He Long. Xiao Ke was brother-in-law to He Long. The downfall of Yang brothers implicated Liao, who subsequently retired as Vice Chairman of NPC in 1992-93. He Pengfei, He Long's son, was promoted to major general in 1988, which made He the youngest major general then. The downfall of Yang brothers froze off He Pengfei's career. He was transferred to be Deputy Commander of the Navy in 1992, on which he stayed till his death in 2001. In comparison, Cao Gangchuan, who was deputy director of GSD

Armament Department in 1985 while He was director of this department, was promoted to Deputy Chief of General Staff in 1996 and Chief of the General Armament Department in 1998.

⁸⁶ One viable choice to replace Jiang was the disgraced Zhao Ziyang. However, Deng's people allegedly approached him quietly and made it a precondition for Zhao's political revival that Zhao had to make a public apology for his wrong positions and behaviors. Deng's offer was rejected by Zhao because he did not want to be "guilty by the judgment of history". The above was based on the author's interview with Yuan Weishi, who quoted words from Zhao Ziyang's second son, Guangzhou, January 2013. However, many who were credibly familiar with China's high politics in the 1990s said that this offer was not politically possible because the Elders represented by Chen Yun and Bo Yibo, both staunch opponents of Zhao Ziyang, would have never agreed on having Zhao back, and Deng understood it. Some of this camp argued that even if Deng made such an offer, he didn't mean to have Zhao back but wanted to get peace of mind by having Zhao's confession of being guilty as charged. These views were expressed in the author's interview with a retired Vice Minister-level official who had connection and was familiar with Deng's thinking, Washington DC, July 2009 as well an interview with an aid of a senior official who was very close to Deng Xiaoping, summer 2010; Interview with a former translator of Deng Xiaoping who was familiar with China's high politics in the early 1990s, summer of 2013. Other evidence for this state of affairs exists as well. Ezra Vogel's, in his recent book on Deng Xiaoping indicated that if Jiang didn't comply with Deng's wishes, Deng would have had Qiao Shi to host the Zhuhai meeting with the possibility of thinking of replacing Jiang with Qiao. See Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, pp. 677 and 681.

⁸⁷ Deng was possibly dismayed by the prospect of cutting the Yang brothers out. Deng and Yang had been close since 1932 and Yang Shangkun had been Deng's loyal supporter for decades. International Friendship Liaison Association (IFLA), the front organization of the PLA GPD, had a nickname of "Deng-Yang Friendship Association" as both Yang and Deng's children were servicing in that association. Interview with a former official who worked at the IFLA, 2010.

⁸⁸ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 630.

⁸⁹ Among those officers who were initially repressed and sidelined by Yang Baibing but revived their military career was Liao Xilong, later Chief of General Logistics Department. Liao, a talented commander during the 1979 Sino-Vietnam war, was sidelined for eight years before pulled back to the promotion track by Jiang. He was a legendary figure by sticking to his own execution of a battle, ignoring his superior He Qizong's order, and winning a decisive battle. However, Deng Xiaoping, after hearing the story of Liao in the war, mistook He Qizong, Liao's superior commander in the war, for Liao. He Qizong was thus put on a superfast-track promotion. He was good at pleasing Yang Shangkun and later on became one of Yang's most trusted officers. With a direct character and pride of a professional officer, Liao did not get along with Yang Baibing. This resulted in stagnation of promotion for Liao for eight years. Liao's story was repeatedly confirmed by interviews with several unrelated senior PLA officers.

⁹⁰ Before mid 1980s, Taiwan affairs had been characterized as "struggles with enemies." The Taiwan Affairs Offices were previously called "Office of Struggles with Enemies" (*duidi douzheng bangongshi*). Directors and Deputy Directors of Office of Struggles with Enemies spread in different provinces were active-duty PLA officers, with authorization to carry guns. See Tian Jia ed., *Fujian Provincial Chronicle: Chronicle of Fujian-Taiwan Relations* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2010), <http://www.fjsq.gov.cn/ShowText.asp?ToBook=226&index=166&>.

⁹¹ Interview with a Beijing-based scholar on Taiwan studies, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁹² Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

⁹³ Wei Chengsi, disciple of Nan Huai-chin, wrote an 10,000-word article about the secret envoy communications across Taiwan Strait based on Nan's oral account, which was published by Taiwan's shang ye zhou kan (Issue 166, published on 07/20/2000. This article was quoted by BBC. See Yang Mengyu, "Cross Straits Secret Envoy Incident Draws Attention in Taiwan", *BBC Chinese*, 07/20/2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_843200/newsid_843200/843275.stm. The author's interview with Dr. Richard Bush of Brookings Institution in March 2014 also indicated that the US was aware of the exchange of secret envoys between Beijing and Taipei in 1980s and 1990s. And for latter point, see Ye Xuanning used a pseudonym, "Yue Feng," in formal communications at work; Zhou Ruijin, "Nan Huai-chin: messenger across Taiwan Strait," *ren min wen zhai* (People's Digest), Issue 4 of 2012, http://paper.people.com.cn/rmwz/html/2012-04/01/content_1034220.htm?div=-1.

⁹⁴ Tzou Jing-wen, *Li Denghui Zhizheng Gaobai Shilu* (A True Account of Lee Teng-hui in Power) (Taipei: INK, 2001)/

⁹⁵ Wang Mingyi, “Arms sales to Taiwan brings in talks across Taiwan Strait?”, *zhong guo shi bao* (China Times), October 06/2008, <http://www.cetin.net.cn/cetin2/servlet/cetin/action/HtmlDocumentAction.jsessionid=49C47F02345B1614F09737B571C93BB9?baseid=1&docno=359905>.

⁹⁶ In Liu Huaqing’s memoir, Liu expressed subtle disappointment with Yang Shangkun on a number of occasions, under whom Liu complained about making “small but painful progresses” in areas Liu deeply cared about. Zhang Zhen unquestionably shared his mentor General Zhang Aiping’s antagonism against Yang brothers’ attempt of building the army of Yang Family. Former aids of Zhang Zhen, in interviews the author conducted, also complained how the GPD under Yang Baibing bullied the National Defense University ostensibly, a resentment which would have been naturally shared by Zhang Zhen.

⁹⁷ Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, p. 246.

⁹⁸ Jiang’s systematic recruiting of officers benefited from several lines: his own associations with the PLA officers; secondly, Yu Yong Bo and thirdly, Zhang Zhen. Jiang was familiar with a group of PLA officers stationed in Shanghai, Zhejiang and Nanjing, while he was serving as major and Party Secretary of Shanghai (1985-89), such as Ba Zhongdan and Fu Quanyou. Yu Yongbo’s connection to Jiang was partly through his experience as Director of Political Department of Nanjing Military Region in 1985 with jurisdiction covering Shanghai where Jiang was Party Secretary. Yu’s appointment as Chief of PLA GPD was allegedly influenced by Yu Qiuli, the former Chief of GPD (1982-87) ahead of Yang Baibing (1987-92). Zeng Qinghong, Jiang Zemin’s close associate and advisor, was secretary for Yu Qiuli for three years and Zeng’s father was townsmen and a long-term friend of Yu Qiuli. See Preface of Yu Qiuli Memoir written by Zeng Qinghong, *Yu Qiuli Memoir*, People’s Press, 2011, also republished by China Petroleum News, 07/28/2011. Zhang Zhen’s connection with Jiang started with the shared path of Zhang with Jiang’s adopted father in the New Fourth Army, pursued by Jiang as a way to recruit officers who went through the training and education of National Defense University where Zhang used to be the President (1985-92).

⁹⁹ Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁰ “(Admiral) Liu had hammered on table with his fist more than once in open fights with Jiang”, according to an interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁰¹ Yang Shangkun, the former CMC Secretary General and then Vice Chairman, allegedly chose not to become the formal member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee but nonetheless kept the right to attend all Politburo Standing Committee meeting before his downfall in 1992; Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, p. 220.

¹⁰² Interview with a PLA officer, Guangzhou, January 2013.

¹⁰³ Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

¹⁰⁴ During the missile tests in July 1995, Admiral Liu was visiting an army corps in the northern territory of China. See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing’s Memoir*, p. 655. And then during the cross-Strait crisis in March 1996, Liu was attending various discussions of Shandong and Guangdong teams of the National People’s Congress. There was no indication, either from Liu’s own memoir, other generals’ memoir and multiple interviews the author conducted, that Admiral Liu was one of the main decision-makers of the 1995-96 Taiwan crisis.

¹⁰⁵ , Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing’s Memoir*, p. 681.

¹⁰⁶ A container vessel named Yinhe, which was registered to the State-owned China Ocean Shipping Company, was accused to deliver a large consignment of thiodiglycol and thionyl chloride to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. The first chemical is the base for mustard gas and the second a building block for sarin, the nerve gas. Yinhe was forced to be adrift on the high seas, as the US turned on the regional GPS signals. It was pursued and harassed by US warships and military aircraft, according to the Chinese government. China was forced to allow the American inspection team to examine all the goods on this ship. However, the inspection team failed to find the dangerous chemicals the US intelligence accused China of. The US government never issued an apology for this incident. See Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China: An Investigative History*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), pp. 396-400; John W. Garver, *China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a Post-Imperial World* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), pp. 189-194.

¹⁰⁷ Admiral Liu Huaqing co-led AELSG officially. The other co-leader was State Counselor Zou Jiahua, son-in-law of Marshal Ye Jianying. However, both in seniority and division of responsibility, it was unlikely that Zou played a bigger role than Admiral Liu. This conclusion could also be supported by the fact that the daily operation of AELSG was going through the CMC's Office of Arms Trading, headed by Cao Gangchuan, who directly answered to Admiral Liu. The MFA, State Planning Commission, Commission for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND), and CMC Arms Trading Office all had representation on this group. See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 681.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Bob Einhorn, Washington DC, May 1, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, p. 238.

¹¹⁰ Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China: An Investigative History*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), pp. 396-400.

¹¹¹ Interview with Bob Einhorn, Washington DC, May 1, 2014.

¹¹² American inspectors technically did not board the ship to examine the goods, as Beijing required. But instead, the ship unloaded all the containers on the port which were subsequently inspected by American inspectors. Interview with Bob Einhorn, Washington DC, May 1, 2014.

¹¹³ Shi Changxue, *Naval Commander Liu Huaqing* (Beijing: changzheng chubanshe, 2013). Abstract of this book in electronic version, which documented this incident, could be found in the following web link: <http://cul.qq.com/a/20130715/012597.htm>.

¹¹⁴ Cai Yansheng, "Commemorating Comrade Liu Huaqing Forever: One Year after Vice Chairman Liu Passed Away", *website of China North Industries Group Corporation*, March 16, 2012, <http://www.cngc.com.cn/cn/newsdetail.aspx?id=23351>.

¹¹⁵ Zhu Xuechen, "Poly CEO talked about how business started with arms deals", *ying cai magazine*, May 27, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Yu Dong, "Cannot get away from being arms exporters", *Southern Weekend*, May 1, 2013, http://www.360doc.com/content/13/0518/19/2720734_286391666.shtml.

¹¹⁷ Poly Group was founded with the joint funding by PLA GSD and CITIC. Wang Jun, son of Wang Zhen, was long-term CEO of CITIC. Major General He Ping, son-in-law of Deng Xiaoping and son of Maj. Gen. He Biao, served as Director of the Board of Poly Group till 2010. Wang Xiaochao, son-in-law of Yang Shangkun, was the Secretary of the Disciplinary Commission of Poly Group. Zhang Dayan, "Large SOEs and Princelings," *Chinese Newsweekly*, June 3, 2013, http://money.163.com/13/0603/12/90EQ0E1300252G50_all.html.

¹¹⁸ The author attended this talk as an undergraduate student in 1994.

¹¹⁹ Interview with a retired strategist who was closely connected to China's manned space program, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹²⁰ The other one was the sending of the two American aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in 1996. Shi Changxue, *Naval Commander Liu Huaqing* (Beijing: changzheng chubanshe, 2013). Abstract of this book in electronic version, which documented this incident, could be found in the following web link: <http://cul.qq.com/a/20130715/012597.htm>.

¹²¹ The Mischief Reef Incident in 1994 refers to the crisis between China and the Philippines due to the Philippines' discovery of the structure built by the Chinese on the Mischief Reef (also called Meiji Reef in Chinese) in the Spratly Islands, which was claimed by both China and the Philippines.

¹²² Interview with a senior PLA Navy officer, Beijing, 2012.

¹²³ Shi Changxue, "Liu Huaqing's Aircraft Carrier Dream", *Zong Heng Magazine*, Issue 3 of 2013.

¹²⁴ Zhong Jian (钟坚), "Research and Study of the CCP's Aircraft Carrier Construction" (中共建构航舰之研析), *jian duan ke ji*, Issue 7 of 2003.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ This resistance almost led to the failure of China's purchase of Varyag, China's first aircraft carrier (renamed into Liaoning). As early as 1991, the PLA Navy started to investigate the possibility of buying Varyag, an aircraft carrier which was in disrepair. In 1998, it was finally bought from the Ukraine, but was stripped before it sailed over. Admiral Liu was eager to conclude this deal. He ordered the GSD, the navy and the China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC) to provide a feasibility study in 1995 and then urged Cao Gangchuan, Deputy Chief of General Staff, and He Pengfei, Vice Commander of the PLAN, to oversee the whole project. But it was not till 1996 that Ukraine was willing to consider selling it to China.

through auction. The PLAN sent a proposal to the Arms Trading Office under the CMC and another formal report to the State Council to accelerate the approval and support for this deal. However, the State Council could not make a decision because of the differences in the leadership over the aircraft carrier. Admiral Liu was still on the Standing Committee but he was not influential enough to push this deal successfully through. The clock was ticking as five other countries were also bidding for Varyag. The GSD eventually found a private businessman, Xu Zengping, who was able to raise the funds (US\$ 20 million) through his stock trading company to purchase the carrier. He Pengfei, Vice Commander of the PLAN, even came out in private capacity to meet this businessman to verify that it was indeed the desire of the Navy to buy this aircraft carrier. In 2002, Varyag finally arrived in Dalian and became China's first aircraft carrier. But it was an officially unwelcomed result that many Chinese officials and senior officers in the PLA were afraid of supporting due to the known resistance of Jiang Zemin and others. The purchase went through but largely depended on an individual businessman's ambition and efforts. See Zhang Xingfu, "Xu Zengping and Varyag", *qi lu zhou kan*, November 3, 2012; "Xu Zengping revealed the details about the Varyag deal", *ji nan shi bao*, 2011.

¹²⁷ Rear Admiral Zheng Ming, who was in charge of the Navy's armament, visited Russia in 1992 with Lin Hu, Vice Commander of the Air Force and He Pengfei, Director of GSD Armament Department, when China was interested in buying Su-27. Zheng proposed to Lin Hu whether it was possible for the PLAFAF to include several Su-27k in the purchase package, which Zheng proposed to belong to PLAFAF but with possibility of allowing the Navy to study its technology. Lin was supportive of this proposal but it was shot down by other PLAFAF officers, most likely Wang Hai, Commander of the PLAFAF. Technically, this would have put the PLAFAF in a dilemma of owning fighters the PLAN used. See Zheng Ming, "In 1992 China Passed By Varyag and Su-27K Carrier-borne Fighter," *huanqiu shibao*, March 3, 2013.

¹²⁸ Interview with a retired PLA senior officer, Beijing, summer of 2014.

¹²⁹ Interview with a senior PLA Navy officer, Beijing, October 2013.

¹³⁰ In early 1990s, Li Peng had strong power bases not only among the Elders, but in several powerful bureaucracies such as the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Water Resources and the electric power ministry/industry.

¹³¹ Li Peng had headed the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group between 1988 and 1996, which officially justified his seat in foreign policy-making. From Li Peng's memoir, he had an upper hand in foreign policy initiatives at least in 1990, exemplified by Li informing Jiang the possibility of a secret meeting with Vietnamese Party Secretary Nguyen Van Linh and Prime Minister Do Muoi in Chengdu and reporting to Deng Xiaoping on this the next day. (See Li Peng, *Li Peng's Foreign Affairs Diary*, Xinhua Press, 2008, with the chapter on the Chengdu meeting previewed at data.book.hexun.com/chapter-1527-3-2.shtml). As Secretary General of the Party, Jiang still played a more determinant role than Li Peng in foreign and security policy-making even though he did not have Li's title. Still, they had to cooperate carefully without scraping each other. See David Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 50; Zhong Feiteng, "Peripheral Concept and China's Foreign Strategy", *wai jiao ping lun*, Issue 4 of 2011, pp. 121.

¹³² Deng Xiaoping was supportive of developing friendly and cooperative relations with neighboring countries but he emphasized the importance of "handling important bilateral relations with important countries", i.e. the West. It is likely that Li Peng was more enthusiastic about improving relations with neighboring countries in early 1990s as he could barely visit western countries without stirring up loud protests and demonstrations. Therefore, improving relations with neighbor countries was the only viable area of achievements in foreign affairs for Li Peng. Jiang Zemin dealt with the West and primarily the US even when Li Peng headed the FALSG in early 1990s.

¹³³ This policy was started in the late 1980s in the form of "good neighbor policy". Premier Li Peng first publicly advocated that China "emphasizes the development of good neighborly relations with surrounding countries" in a government report in 1988. See "Surrounding countries" in Li Peng's report in 1988 only referred to Mongolia, North Korea, ASEAN and South Asian countries.

¹³⁴ Li Peng explicitly stated that developing good-neighbor relations with surrounding countries was the focus of China's foreign policy in March 1991. He in 1991 included Japan as part of "China's surrounding countries". It was not until March 1993 that Russia and Central Asian countries entered China's thinking when talking about "surrounding countries". See Zhong Feiteng, "The 'Periphery' concept and China's

international strategy, Foreign Affairs Commentary, October 23/2013, <http://study.ccln.gov.cn/fenke/zhengzhixue/zzzgwj/34774-1.shtml>.

¹³⁵ Luo Tongsong, “CMC held New Year Reception for retired officers, Jiang talked about army building”, *People’s Daily*, December 1992.

¹³⁶ This speech Jiang gave was not publicized until 2006. See Jiang Zemin, *Jiang Zemin’s Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Beijing: People’s Press, 2006), p. 279.

¹³⁷ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹³⁸ When negotiating over territorial demarcations in the 1990s, China followed two models, the so-called “Sino-Myanmar models” and the “Sino-Russian models”. The first models was one adopted when dealing with smaller countries and followed the principle of making reasonable concessions in order to resolve the dispute and visibly demonstrate a good neighbor stance. In the latter models, when facing larger and stronger countries such as Russia and India, the Chinese government took a harder line and sought a balanced compromise. The Sino-Vietnamese border negotiation followed the Sino-Myanmar model, which many in the PLA, according to the author’s interviews, believed compromised China’s national interests. The rationales for the two models of solving territorial disputes were explained by Yu Fengchun, a research at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. See Yi Xuan, “Why it is so difficult with India in territorial negotiations?”, *kan tian xia*, Issue 12 of 2013.

¹³⁹ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁴⁰ As a result, MFA obtained the other but second wanted goal on the PLA’s behalf. The PLA instead insisted on getting the peak of Laoshan because of sentimental reasons: too many PLA soldiers died there. China and Vietnam signed an agreement and solved their land-based dispute in 1999.

¹⁴¹ Qiao Shi, Chairman of the People’s Congress, was allegedly considered by Deng to replace Jiang in 1991-92. Qiao’s rivalry with Jiang could be heard when they emphasized different rent principles. Qiao emphasized the supreme position of the Constitution. In an interview by *People’s Daily* in May 1997, Qiao pointed out “all power in China belongs to the people and the people exercise the state power through the National People’s Congress and local people’s congress at various levels. Jiang instead emphasized the supreme and overriding position of the Party. Jiang said in the 5th plenary session of the 14th CCP Central Committee in September 1995 that “our senior cadre, primarily provincial party secretaries, governors, and ministers, Central Committee members and Politburo members, must stress the political awareness... Stressing political awareness starts from obeying the Party’s Constitution... Senior cadres need to be Marxist statesmen.” See Jiang Zemin, “Cadres Must Stress Political Awareness”, *People’s Daily*, September 27, 1995.

¹⁴² After Deng passed away, Jiang decided to move onto beat Liu down. Liu Chaoying, Admiral Liu’s daughter and a Guangzhou-based intelligence officer with the PLA GSD, was then involved in a political donation scandal in the US in 1999. Although that case was smoothed out with the help from Ji Shengde, former Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei’s son who was in charge of the GSD intelligence (later brought down by Jiang and now in jail for life), Liu’s other daughter and daughter-in-law were arrested for a period of time and then released. This incident intimidated and eventually silenced Admiral Liu who remained influential after retirement.

¹⁴³ Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

¹⁴⁴ This list included senior officers such as He Qizong, Zong Shunliu, Zhou Wenyan, Li Jijun and Liu Lunxian.

¹⁴⁵ The revised Regulation on Active-duty Officer Service in 1994 made it possible for all officers at the level of Military Region Principle to be promoted to full generals. In comparison, China, on average, has kept a total of 28-35 active-duty full generals since 1993. Full generals totaled only 17 in 1988, 28 in 2009, and 34 in 2014. Jiang promoted 25 full generals in 1993 and 1994 alone. See “China’s Active-Duty Full Generals Increased to 31”, *xin jing bao*, August 1, 2013. Part of these promotions aimed at retiring a group of senior officers smoothly and making room for others. For example, seven out of 19 full generals promoted in 1994 retired by July 1995. General Zhang Wannian, who was both close to General Zhang Zhen and Jiang, became the CMC Vice Chairman, but ranked ahead of Chi Haotian, who exceeded Zhang in seniority. Chi Haotian was the Chief of General Staff (1987-92), ahead of Zhang Wannian. (1992-95). Chi became a full general in 1988 and Zhang became a full general in 1993. Chi was close to Deng Xiaoping and his military secretary Wang Ruilin, who later on became member of the CMC.

¹⁴⁶ The PLA issued the Regulation on Active-duty Officer Service in 1988 which set age limits. However, this regulation was largely not enforced. The revised regulation, issued in 1994, explicitly required those at the level of Military Region Principle retire by 65 and those at the level of Military Region Deputy retire by 63. After 1994, in very rare occasions, PLA officers overstay after the mandated retirement age. In 2000, this regulation was revised again and transformed into a law, which made requirement such as retirement after 10 years of service in one position.

¹⁴⁷ A group of elite military officers at the level of army corps, who were promoted in 1985 and were around 45 years old, were inserted into deputy positions in general departments and military regions, with the possibility of being promoted to the level of Military Region Principal in three years. This helped almost a whole generation of officers leapfrog in their careers. This measure had prepared the youngest PLA officers at the level of Military Region Principal in 1995.

¹⁴⁸ The *PLA Daily* explicitly explained that the essence of “stressing political awareness” was to “firmly follow the command of the Party center and CMC, in which Comrade Jiang Zemin was the core” and “firmly safeguard the authority of the Party center and the CMC.” See “Studying Lei Feng’s Spirit and Carry Forward the Theme of the Time”, *PLA Daily*, March 5, 1996. According to a PLA officer, “Stressing political awareness was to stress the importance of following Chairman Jiang and safeguarding Jiang’s authority. In the military, when we did the study sessions, a point was repeatedly clarified that the military has to obey the Party and Chairman Jiang and that Jiang embodied the Party.” Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, August of 2014.

¹⁴⁹ The two-track management of PLA officers was put in place through the “one decision and four regulations,” Jiang ordered the CMC and three General Departments to publicize and implement. The decision was Decision on the implementation of the 14th Party spirit of the Fourth Plenary Session of the military to further strengthen Party building. The four regulations included: Interim regulations on the use of audit on revenue distribution of military production and business operation income, Interim regulation on auditing of economic responsibility of military leadership and cadres; Regulation on auditing of PLA armament funds payment; Interim regulation on transfer of military financial settlement funds.

¹⁵⁰ Zhang Wannian fell under Jiang’s control under this circumstance. It was alleged, according to the author’s interview, that at the end of 1980s, Zhang’s wife accepted a favor from a GSD officer (also from Shandong, Zhang’s home province) when doing interior decorations of their house. The bribery was worth millions of yuan used not only for interior decoration but to purchase all the imported appliances. This officer later on reported the bribery to Jiang in 1995-96. Jiang chose not to discipline Zhang but just had a talk to him. After this episode, Zhang was “pocketed” by Jiang and became his trusted general. From then on, Zhang Wannian became the core supporter of Jiang in the military,” said a retired PLA officer, also from Shandong Province, who knew the officer who reported Zhang for bribery. Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011. This was also mentioned by an article authored by You Ji. You mentioned a corruption allegation against Zhang Wannian in 1996. See You Ji, “Jiang Zemin’s command of the military”, reference 10.

¹⁵¹ Normally, only the director of the PLA GPD could become the member of the CMC.

¹⁵² Take one example. When Jiang found an officer in an important position committed a grave offense or made mistakes, he would call this person directly and asked for a meeting. In the meeting, Jiang would play up the severity of the offense or mistake of this officer, and then forgave this officer for that ‘grave mistake’ in exchange for personal gratitude and loyalty.

¹⁵³ Dai Xu, a former PLA Air Force officer, disagreed on this view that Jiang helped improve the military’s wellbeing in 1993. He pointed out that Jiang only tried to “pay the debts” of military building and it was not until Hu’s era that the PLA’s wellbeing was improved. Contrary to Dai Xu’s view, You Ji believed that Jiang, by increasing the wages of officers and troops three separate times and the 1995 reform of military housing, greatly improved the “living standards of the rank-and-file officers, who in gratitude supported Jiang”. See You Ji, “Jiang Zemin’s command of the military”.

¹⁵⁴ A senior diplomat recalled that meetings for foreign political or military leaders with Jiang Zemin could be arranged through the PLA’s system much faster than through the system of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some meetings could not be possibly arranged by MFA, for example, when Jiang was on vacation in Beidaihe, but were arranged by the PLA within weeks.

¹⁵⁵ Jiang Zemin advocated to put the military institution and education as a priority of the army building in April 1999. See Huang Guozhu, Jia Yong and Cao Zhi, “The Core of the Party’s Third Generation Leadership and China’s Defense and Military Modernization Construction”, *PLA Daily*, July 31, 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, pp. 245-6.

¹⁵⁷ According to Jiang’s talk in a meeting on the Gulf War in June 1991, Jiang pointed out that China “needs ‘Assassin’s Mace’ in armament” development and that “possessing top-notch (hi-tech) weaponry as ‘Assassin’s Mace’”, “a few projects that was (militarily) determinant and meaningful” is of strategic significance to China’s national security and economic development”. *Jiang Zemin Writings*, vol 1 pp. 142 and 146.

¹⁵⁸ Jiang had given repeated instructions on the development of “Assassin’s Mace” since 1991. In the CMC meeting on the study of the 1991 Gulf War, Jiang warned that China’s gap with the West in terms of electronic technology was not narrowing but enlarging. On 3 December 1992, Jiang wrote a letter to Admiral Liu Huaqing and General Zhang Zhen emphasized the importance of developing “Assassin’s Mace”, attached with a summary of Deng’s talk on 28 November, in which Deng emphasized the importance of armament development. See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing’s Memoir*, pp. 608-09, 666.

¹⁵⁹ Wang Congbiao, “Implement The Strategy of Strengthening the Military with High Technology; Improve the PLA’s Modern Defense War-fighting Capability”, *PLA Daily*, February 13, 2001, 202.84.17.73/mil/htm/20010213/358908.htm.

¹⁶⁰ Jiang’s efforts of divesting the PLA from the market place in 1998 was started with the cutting the tax privileges of PLA-run enterprises. The PLA-run enterprises had enjoyed a low tax rate of 9.9% till early 1998 while non-military enterprises face an income tax of 33%. Then, anti-smuggling topped the list of economic work of the nation as the PLA was heavily involved in smuggling activities. Jing announced in July 1998 in the PLA’s anti-smuggling meeting to divest the PLA from the market place. Jiang said: “the military holds the gun barrels. If the military... participates in smuggling or escorts smuggling, the government will face a tough challenge. You have guns and cannons and holds the banner of the military, who dares to stop you?” See *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol. 2. This article could also be found in the website of People’s Daily at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/180138/10818639.html>.

¹⁶¹ Xiong Guangkai became the director of the 2nd Department (intelligence) of GSD in 1988. He became Assistant Chief of General Staff in 1992 and Deputy Chief of General Staff in 1996. After overstaying in his post for one year, Xiong retired in 2006.

¹⁶² General Chi Haotian, whom many suspected put loyalty in Deng and Deng’s family, was added as Zhang Wannian joined the Politburo. In comparison, General Zhang Zhen, the previous CMC Vice Chairman, never became member of Politburo, though Liu Huaqing was the member of the PBSC.

¹⁶³ Hong Xiaohu, “China’s new mechanism of national security decision-making”, *China Strategy*, Issue 1, January 2004.

¹⁶⁴ According to an unconfirmed source, Xiong was already member of TALSG in 1993.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, 2010.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with a senior PLA officer, 2013 and 2014.

¹⁶⁷ Four political officers were Yu Yongbo, Xu Caihou, Wang Ruilin and Chi Haotian. The other members of the CMC in 1999 were Zhang Wannian, Fu Quanyou, Wang Ke, Cao Gangchuan and Guo Boxiong.

¹⁶⁸ Multiple interviewees who were active-duty and retired PLA officers confirmed the widely publicized rumor that Guo Boxiong earned the trust from Jiang by standing outside Jiang’s room as a guard when Jiang was napping inside. This incident took place when Jiang was touring the Lanzhou Military Region and Guo was still chief of the 47th army corps.

¹⁶⁹ A senior PLA officer indicated that Yu Yongbo held a conservative and suspicious attitude towards the mil-to-mil relationship between China and the US after he received “humiliating” and “downgrading” receptions from the US side. Yu, then chief of PLA GPD and a close associate with Jiang, had no counterpart in the US military. Therefore, the US side arranged chaplain corps of the US Army, Navy and Air Force hosting and briefing Yu during his 2000 visit to the US. The powerful PLA leaders, when visiting the US, were always accompanied by a group rising stars or second-tier officers with great potential to elevate to the military leadership. The accompanying senior officers of Yu’s trip included Ma

Xiaotian, who later became the PLA's Deputy Chief of General Staff and then Commander of the PLAAF. Ma was taken to visit the canteens of the US military. Neither Yu nor Ma has ever recovered from this experience and then held a particularly hard-lined position against real communication and cooperation with the US military. See reference 56. Therefore, Yu Yongbo was unlikely to intervene directly in the deliberation of the military position on issues involving the US simply because of his personal "bias" against the US. However, as a ranking member of the CMC, Yu must have attended the regular working meetings of the CMC and could lament on policies personally. More importantly, Yu could exert a great influence in the military's propaganda and political work as chief of GPD.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with a senior civilian official with access to Politburo meetings.

¹⁷¹ The other influential general was Xiong Guangkai. However, Zhang far outranked Xiong and therefore his words carried more authority and weight among professional soldiers in the PLA. Xiong, only holding the position of Deputy Chief of General Staff, was important because he maintained a very close relationship with Jiang and also because Xiong was the gatekeeper to Jiang on military intelligence. Zhang's opinions may reflect more of voices of professionally-oriented PLA officers and the PLA's institutional interests while Xiong aligned himself personally closer to Jiang.

¹⁷² Interview with a retired PLA officer, Guangzhou, 2011.

¹⁷³ Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, p. 267.

¹⁷⁴ Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, pp. 259-68.

¹⁷⁵ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 579.

¹⁷⁶ The top leader is "in charge of general policy" as Jiang Zemin explained to David M. Lampton, "but not in charge of actual deployments." Lampton also believed the lack of "anemic horizontal, cross-system integrating structures" contributed the difficulty to the civilians' monitoring of military behavior. See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 185-9.

¹⁷⁷ General Xiong was one of very few officers from the list of people slated for promotion to survive the political fallout from the demise of the Yang brothers. Because of his close tie with Jiang, he managed to postpone his mandated retirement for more than one year, a rare exception to a hard and fast rule in the PLA.

¹⁷⁸ Xiong Guangkai became director of military intelligence in 1988. He was promoted to be Assistant Chief of General Staff overseeing military intelligence in 1992 and then Deputy Chief of General Staff in 1996.

¹⁷⁹ Jiang expanded Ministry of State Security early in his tenure and placed it under his right-hand man Zhou Yongkang, whose wife is the cousin of Jiang's wife. On foreign intelligence, Jiang was anxious about lack of full access. Chen Xiaogong, a senior military intelligence official at the Second Department of PLA GSD, offended Jiang in late 1990s by blocking the communication of a piece of untranslated English-language raw intelligence to Jiang. Chen did not do it on purpose but worried that Jiang could not read English and would blame the Second Department for not doing the job right. Yang Hui, then a much more junior intelligence officer, reported it to Jiang. Jiang was furious about it and instructed to send Chen Xiaogong on missions that prevented him from serving in Beijing. Chen was assigned to overseas positions after that incident in 1999 and came back to Beijing in 2005, after Jiang retired as the CMC Chairman. Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁸⁰ According to Bonnie Glaser, who wrote extensively about the PLA's role in China's foreign and security policies and national security crisis management based on her numerous interviews with highly-placed PLA officers.

¹⁸¹ General Xiong was able to influence Jiang, but it was another matter whether his advice was well-informed and well-grounded. Xiong was manipulative, intrusive, and ruthless in taking out rivals. Xiong frequently bypassed senior-ranking officers by directly calling junior-level officers to get answers and give instructions, which led to animosity between him and some of his subordinates. Many believed that Xiong could have better served China's leaders if he had held to the truth more, and was less sycophantic and more professional. Some, especially younger and junior officers in the PLA foreign affairs system who were not Xiong's direct subordinates, were impressed by Xiong's influence both as a military intelligence/foreign affairs officer within the PLA system and his influence over Jiang. Interviews with multiple PLA officers, 2011-2014.

¹⁸² During a NATO bombing campaign, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was hit by five laser-guided bombs dropped by U.S. planes on May 7, 1999. Three Embassy employees were killed and 27 were

wounded in this attack. See In "Oral Presentation to the Chinese Government Regarding the Accidental Bombing of the PRC Embassy in Belgrade," June 17, 1999.

http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/1999_eap_speeches.html.

¹⁸³ Bonnie Glaser pointed out that not all members of the Politburo Standing Committee attended. Officials from MFA and MSS also attended this meeting. Gen. Chi Haotian and Gen. Xiong Guangkai both attended the meeting. Chas Freeman believed that Gen. Xiong made the briefing at the meeting as Xiong talked to him afterwards and mentioned this occurrence of this briefing he made at the PBSC.

¹⁸⁴ Chas Freeman, then the assistant defense secretary, met with Xiong in Beijing to explain in private that the bombing indeed was a mistake but learned that Xiong had just briefed the PBSC. Interview with Chas Freeman, Washington DC, spring of 2014. Bonnie Glaser also confirmed it by citing a separate reliable source of the PLA. In order to answer the most central question "whether President Clinton had ordered the attack", Bonnie Glaser explained that the PLA GSD "examined five possibilities: 1) President Clinton gave the order to bomb the Chinese embassy; 2) General Clark, the head of the NATO forces in Europe, issued the order; 3) A lower-level commander gave the order; 4) The incident was caused by a technical mistake; and 5) An individual who had a role in selecting the targets and was anti-China was responsible for the bombing." Without sufficient information to make a definite assessment, the PLA GSD decided to rule out the first possibility and Xiong supported this conclusion, according to Bonnie Glaser.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Bonnie Glaser, Washington DC, fall of 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*, pp. 416-17.

¹⁸⁷ This was confirmed in an interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012. None of the interviewees gave further specifics about the "military option", though that was the exact wording they used.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with several PLA officers, 2012-14.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Ambassador Chas Freeman, Washington DC, 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Ambassador Freeman met General Xiong in 1999. Xiong probably recognized that Freeman's explanation of the NATO bombing was accurate, but he expressed that he had nowhere to go on this question as he had already briefed the PBSC on the PLA's assessment that the bombing was deliberate.

¹⁹¹ A talk given by a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2010. This officer made that comment in a general context without referring to any specific policy mistake or any policy-maker. He pointed out two other interest groups in Chinese politics are some State-owned enterprises and local governments.

¹⁹² This came as reflections through interviews the author conducted with officials of MFA, Ministry of Public Security and several senior and junior PLA officers. Once the official conclusion was made and transmitted to different levels of governments, unless there was an official correction, this became an "official memory" of bureaucracies, despite the controversies and uncertainties during the deliberations and even after more credible information came in afterwards.

¹⁹³ This conclusion was based on extensive interview with multiple PLA officers, as well as western security experts including Chas Freeman, Richard Bush, and You Ji between 2011 and 2014. Chas Freeman also acknowledged that this 10-year count-down plan existed. You Ji wrote on this point as early as 2006. See You Ji (2006), "China's Anti-Secession Law and the risk of war in the Taiwan Strait," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 27 (2), pp. 237-57.

¹⁹⁴ The interviews the author conducted showed different allegations on this point. One senior PLA officer pointed out that it was a five-year count-down plan starting from 1999. The other interviewee, a high-level retired American contact who had intensive contacts with the PLA in mid to late-1990s indicated that it was a 10-year countdown plan. Interviews with other PLA officers showed a countdown plan existed, which led to exponential increase of funds invested in armaments research and development. But these contacts did not give specifics on what time frame this countdown plan existed.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with a PLA officer directly involved in Sino-US mil-to-mil relations, Beijing, 2011.

¹⁹⁶ As one active-duty PLA officer interviewed by the author stated, "The trust Xiong had gained [from Jiang] made him stand in the best position to influence Jiang in foreign and security policies. Xiong did not use his great influence to the right end. The worst and most loathed quality of a PLA senior officer is not telling the truth. That was what Xiong did." Interview with an active-duty PLA officer, January 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with a PLA officer directly involved in Sino-US mil-to-mil relations, Beijing, 2011.

¹⁹⁸ After Xiong's retirement, many in the GSD tried to erase his legacy. Yang Hui, Xiong's protégé, remained one of the chiefs overseeing military intelligence until 2011. Yang Hui was then transferred to the

Nanjing Military Region. However, like Xiong, Yang maintained some control over the intelligence apparatus in the Second Department through his former subordinates, which in part aimed at sustaining Jiang Zemin's influence. The Chief of the General Staff later intervened to terminate this practice. Interview with a senior PLA officer, 2014.

¹⁹⁹ "Xiong has no influence now. Neither does he have a legacy here," an officer from GSD Foreign Affairs Office claimed in 2012. Xiong's influence in military intelligence, extended through his protégé Yang Hui, was further cleansed in 2013 and 2014 under Xi. Interviews, 2013 and 2014.

²⁰⁰ See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 185-9.

²⁰¹ Deng handed the title of CMC Chairman to Jiang in 1989 while the session of the incumbent government headed by Secretary General Zhao Ziyang, Deng's designated successor, should have lasted for five years (1987-92). However, the Tian'anmen Incident intensified the conflict between Zhao and Deng, resulting in Zhao's downfall and house arrest for all his life. Jiang took over the seats of CCP Secretary General from the disgraced Zhao and then CMC Chairman from Deng in 1989. Jiang started his first term for five years in 1992 and then the second term in 1997. In 2002, Jiang handed to Hu all the titles except the CMC Chairman, citing the precedent and thus "the informal rule" Deng created when Deng kept the CMC Chairman for another two years (1987-89) after relieving himself of any Party and State position in 1987.

²⁰² The problem of "two centers", as described by Lampton, to mean that "it may be unclear at times where (or who) the authoritative party center is". See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 172-4.

²⁰³ Lu Keng (1919—2008), a prominent journalist in Hong Kong whose interview with Hu Yaobang in 1985 angered Deng Xiaoping and directly led to Hu Yaobang's downfall, made one of the earliest predictions that Jiang would not give up the CMC chairmanship, by following Deng's practice. See Lu Qiang, "How the 4th Generation of the CCP Completes the Succession," *lianhe zaobao*, October 26, 2000, <http://www.renminbao.com/rmb/articles/2000/10/26/5080.html>. In an article published by China's official media, the phrase of "guiding the new leadership for a stretch of road who just got on the horse" (*qi shang ma, song yi cheng*) was publicly used. See Li Nan, "Jiang Zemin's Three Characters Last for 15 Years," *shidai renwu zhoubao*, 09/27/2004, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-09-27/15554438572.shtml>.

²⁰⁴ Jiang Zemin was directly quoted by Professor David Lampton during his meeting with an American delegation including Lampton in 22 November 2002 in Beijing. See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 173-4.

²⁰⁵ "Jiang Zemin Attended the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the PLA NDUT and Announced the Personnel Cuts of 200,000 In Two Years," *Xinhua News Agency*, September 1, 2003, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2003-09-01/146796.html>.

²⁰⁶ In April 2003, a diesel-powered, Ming-class submarine Number 361 had a "mechanical malfunction" during an exercise in the waters of the Yellow Sea, killing all 70 crew members. See "PLA Navy's Submarine 361 Sinking Accident Drove China to Enter Maritime Century," May 15/2003, *zhongguo xinwen zhoubao*, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2003-05-15/14101062948.shtml>.

²⁰⁷ "70 Died in the PLA Submarine Incident, Jiang Zemin Sent His Condolence," *Xinhua News Agency*, May 2, 2003, http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2003-05/02/content_856682.htm; "Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao Met with Relatives of the Victims of the 361 Submarine Sinking Accident," *Chinese Central TV*, May 6, 2003, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2003-05-05/21321030987.shtml>. Generally, in 2003-2004, Jiang consistently ranked ahead of Hu in 2003-2004 in all PLA-related activities including the meeting with PLA representatives at NPC while Hu ranked ahead of Jiang in all non-military activities including the celebration of China's nuclear industry's progress. In the webpage *People's Daily* collected on Jiang Zemin's activities in 2003 and 2004 (<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/2140/>), in 8 of 15 activities both Jiang and Hu both attended, Jiang was ranked ahead of Hu while Hu ranked ahead of Jiang in the rest of 7 activities. For example, "Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin Attended the Exhibition of the 50th Anniversary of China's Nuclear Industry," *People's Daily*, August 30/2004, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/1024/2752741.html>; "Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao Meeting PLA Representatives Group at NPC," *People's Daily*, March 12, 2004.

²⁰⁸ Jia Xiping, "Cao Gangchuan Had a Land-to-space Talk to Astronaut Yang Liwei," October 15, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/keji/1056/2135751.html>.

²⁰⁹ Jia had been director of the CMC Chairman Office and deputy director of the CMC Office since 1994.

²¹⁰ Jiang promoted 79 full generals, compared to 17 promoted by Deng and 45 by Hu (2004-2012). All the active-duty full generals (top military rank) and all military region level (top administrative rank of the PLA) by 2004, and arguably most of lieutenant generals and senior officers of deputy military region level were promoted on Jiang's watch. In the first CMC team Hu chaired throughout 2007-2012, four (Liang Guanglie, Chen Bingde, Li Jinai and Liao Xilong) out of eight CMC members as well as both Vice Chairmen were promoted to full generals by Jiang. The other four CMC members were all promoted to Lieutenant Generals under Jiang's watch, Chang Wanquan in 2003, Wu Shengli in 2003, Jing Zhiyuan in 2000 and Xu Qiliang in 1996. Arguably, Chang Wanquan and Wu Shengli, promoted at the end of Jiang's tenure, may be closer to Hu, compared to Jing Zhiyuan. Xu Qiliang, who was promoted to lieutenant general in 1996 and took a long time to be promoted to a full general, probably proved his distance with Jiang.

²¹¹ General requirements for full general promotions include: becoming an officer at the level of Military Region Principal for 1-2 years; becoming a lieutenant general for more than four years.

²¹² Commanders of the two military regions untouched in 2007 were General Chang Wanquan (Shenyang MR) and General Fan Changlong (Jinan MR). They were generally regarded generally politically neutral and may be relatively closer to Hu. Both were admitted into the CMC after 2012.

²¹³ Beijing Military Region or Beijing Garrison shoulders the task of protecting the safety and stability of Beijing including the top leadership in the capital. Occasionally, the extremely high-value political prisoners are placed in the Beijing Garrison temporarily to ensure their safety.

²¹⁴ It is an unprecedented move to promote Fang, a former commander of Beijing Garrison, to be Chief of General Staff. The reason is that part of the mandate of Beijing Garrison to protect the security and stability of Beijing, including the CMC. Commander of Beijing Garrison always stands in an impossible position. The top political leader and the military leadership rely on him doing the job right for their safeties, therefore his position is extremely important. On the other hand, it is also an extremely sensitive position that easily invites suspicion because Commander of Beijing Garrison has more opportunities to launch a coup and because if he chooses not to fulfill his responsibility, the CMC could be wiped out. It is also a long-held belief both among PLA officers and Chinese politicians that one may easily cultivate his own power base in the area he commands. Examples could be found in Gao Gang, who was nicknamed as King of Northeast China, who many suspected was building an independent kingdom. Chen Xitong, a former Beijing mayor who was convicted for corruption during Jiang's era, was another example of building his power in the capital so much that the top leader feels threatened. Therefore, it was a tacit but prevailing understanding in the PLA that the Commander of Beijing Garrison would have very little to no chance to become Chief of General Staff before Fang Fenghui made the history. See "BMR Commander Fang Fenghui Promoted to Be CGS", *Takungpao*, October 25, 2012, http://www.takungpao.com/news/content/2012-10/25/content_1290601.htm.

²¹⁵ Jia was already promoted to be lieutenant general in 2005 and transferred to GPD in 2008 while keeping the same rank. He was promoted to be a full general in 2011. Therefore, for Jia, the transfer from CMC GO to GPD did not result in personal promotion. His real power was actually reduced because as the director of the CMC GO, he could oversee the "nerve center" of the CMC. See "Resume of Jia Ting'an", Database of Chinese Politicians, <http://renwuku.news.ifeng.com/index/detail/379/jiatingan>.

²¹⁶ Interview with a PLA officer, Changsha, summer of 2013.

²¹⁷ In the 1979 war with Vietnam, Li Zuocheng, then a platoon leader, persisted the war-fighting for 26 days despite multiple injuries. His platoon killed 294 enemies and captured four as well as large amount of armament and war material. Li himself was awarded the title of "war hero" by the CMC. See "Compliments for Heros," Political Department of Guangzhou Military Region, 1979.

²¹⁸ Interview with a retired senior officer at Chengdu Military Region, 2013. General Li Zuocheng was finally promoted to be Commander of Chengdu Military Region in 2014 after Xi Jinping dealt heavy strokes to Jiang's supporters in the military.

²¹⁹ One example for this point is that Liu Zhenwu, the founding commander of the Hong Kong Garrison of the PLA and Commander of the PLA's Guangzhou Military Region, vowed allegiance for Jiang after it was made clear that Jiang was retiring in 2004. Liu, already over 60, was promoted by Jiang in June 2004 to be a full general, which prevented him from retirement. According to the PLA regulation, senior officers older than 60 have to retire unless receiving a promotion. In June 2007, Liu was inter-exchanged with Zhang Qinsheng, who was close to Hu. Liu was therefore transferred to be Deputy Chief of General Staff, with his

actual power taken away, while Hu ordered an investigation against Liu on charges of embezzlement, “supporting mistresses” and “leading a corrupted life”. Liu was forced to retire in 2009.

²²⁰ “Major General: Xu Caihou Selling Military Positions, Monopolising Power and Isolating the CMC ‘Top Leader’”, *Wenweipo*, March 19, 2015, <http://news.wenweipo.com/2015/03/09/IN1503090051.htm>.

²²¹ Interview with a retired PLA senior colonel, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²²² Jiang Zemin Office in Bayi building served as an information nexus for Jiang by requiring major orders of the CMC to be archived (bei an) in this office. “Office of the CPC Central Military Commission Jiang Zemin Revoked,” *Sankei Shimbun*, November 1, 2012. Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, 2014.

²²³ Jiang’s office in the Bayi building was later renamed as “Jiang Zemin Office” instead of CMC Chairman Office. The two Vice Chairmen of the CMC also kept an office in the same building, which occupies one half of the floor each.

²²⁴ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

²²⁵ Even after Yang Hui, head of the Second Department of the GSD under Jiang and Xiong’s protégé, was transferred to Nanjing Military Region on Xi Jinping’s order, his successor continued to brief Yang on military intelligence reports till Fang Fenghui, Chief of General Staff, intervened, according to an interview with a retired senior PLA officer in Beijing in 2013.

²²⁶ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²²⁷ More details emerged in 2013 and 2014 about Gu Junshan’s bribery to both Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong. When Xu was house (hospital) arrested in mid 2013, there was a temporary hesitation to move onto arrest Xu and start the investigation against Guo. Xu’s arrest was publicized because Xu’s further attempt to transfer funds in Hong Kong. When Xu’s arrest was publicized in 2014, the political leadership faced another dilemma whether Guo should be formally arrested, as a wide range of mid-level PLA officers criticized the inaction despite Guo took the same amount of bribery from Gu with Xu. Interviews with multiple senior PLA officers, 2013-2015.

²²⁸ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

²²⁹ Written letters from Xi Jinping to urge the CMC to investigate Gu’s corruption amounted to a dozen.

But none worked. Hu remained his silence in the process. Interview with senior PLA officers, 2014-2015.

²³⁰ Gu Junshan’s corruption case was finally presented to military court in April 2014. A senior PLA officer commented on Hu’s indecisiveness and slow response to this case: “On Gu Junshan’s case, until Liu Yuan and Liao Xilong had ‘laid out the bed’ did Hu come to ‘lie down and sleep’.” Interview with multiple senior PLA officers, 2012-2015.

²³¹ Any contingency and militarized threat on Taiwan would automatically put the PLA right in the center of the policy process on Taiwan. Sustained militarized threats on Taiwan would have sustainably expanded the PLA’s influence in foreign and security policy-making system.

²³² Hu Jintao’s main advisors on Taiwan policy included: Liu Yandong, head of the Ministry of United Front, Wang Gang, Director of CCPCC General Office, Sun Yafu, Director of Research Bureau of Taiwan Affairs Office and Wang Zhaoguo, Vice-Chairman of standing committee of 10th National People’s Congress. Interview with experts specialized in Taiwan affairs based in Beijing and Shanghai, 2013. Liu Yandong was a long-term ally of Hu Jintao, assisted by Hu Deping, son of Hu Yaobang who was Hu Jintao’s political mentor. See “Liu Yandong Advocated No Debates About Questions of ‘Original Sins’ of Private Entrepreneurs and Seeking Answers with Practice,” *diyi caijing ribao*, 12/28/2006, http://www.china.com.cn/news/txt/2006-12/28/content_7568474.htm. Wang Gang was secretary of Maj. Gen. Yang Side, who was long-term director of Taiwan Affairs Office in 1980s and early 1990s and held nine secret dialogues with Lee Teng-hui’s secret envoy. Before stepping into the position of Director of GO, Wang Gang spent his important part of career working under Yang Side. See Kuo Jui Hua, “A study on the Taiwan affairs mechanism of the CPC: “Process of Government” perspective,” PhD dissertation from National Chengchi University, 2009, p. 77. Partial text of this dissertation could be found at <http://dspace.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/bitstream/77345300/72560/3/n089210002803.pdf>; Lin Liyun: Remembering the Days When the All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots Was Established,” *tai sheng* magazine, November 13/2011. <http://www.tailian.org.cn/n1080/n1125/n1060754/1061912.html>. Sun Yafu mastered the research work of Taiwan Affairs Office and directly engaged in Taiwanese business circle and politicians. Wang Zhaoguo was instrumental in pushing through the Anti-Secession Law in the National People’s Congress.

²³³ Qian Qichen, former Vice Premier and Foreign Minister, and Jiang Zemin expressed their views via letters. Interviews with officials involved in Taiwan policy during Hu Jintao's era, Beijing, 2013.

²³⁴ Lien Chan's landmark 2005 visit to Beijing was personally brokered by Chas Freeman.

²³⁵ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Liu Jiaquan, a mainland scholar on Taiwan affairs at the Institute of Taiwan Studies of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, explained the meaning of the Anti-Secession Law. See, "Expert: Hu Jintao's speech hits back on the four ridiculous arguments on the Anti-Secession Law", China News Agency, March 5, 2005, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-03-05/10125273793s.shtml>.

²³⁹ The author's calculation is based on the data of the IMF World Economic Outlook published on April 2014. See knoema.com/tbocwag/gdp-by-country-1980-2013.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Yan Xuetong, a professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁴¹ In the enlarged CMC meeting at the end of 2004, Hu presented his thinking on the direction of army building, which is a manifestation of his "scientific development" theory. New Historic Missions included: (1) to provide an important guarantee of strength for the CCP to consolidate its ruling position, (2) to provide a strong security guarantee for safeguarding the period of important strategic opportunity for national development, (3) to provide a powerful strategic support for safeguarding national interests, and (4) to play an important role in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development. Xu Guoping, "Hu Jintao's important expositions on defense construction and army building in new ages", website of College of Defense Studies of National Defense University, http://www.cdsndu.org/index_en.htm.

²⁴² The new thinking on military diplomacy was effectively implemented by Zhang Qinsheng (Assistant Chief of General Staff in 2004-06; Deputy Chief of General Staff in 2006-07; 1st ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff in 2009-13) and a group of highly professionalized younger senior officers at the level of deputy commander of military region and corps level.

²⁴³ China's non-alignment policy is still in place. It was reinterpreted in 2004-05 so holding military exercises with foreign militaries without targeting a third country was no longer seen as alliance-building behaviors. However, sending Chinese troops overseas without the UN authorization or building military bases overseas are still prohibited because of this non-alignment policy.

²⁴⁴ Interviews with PLA officers who worked for General Zhang Qinsheng, 2013-14. General Zhang was "the only close-to-top officer who willingly work overtime almost everyday and just boiled a bowl of fast food noodles in office in late night", according to one interviewee.

²⁴⁵ "General Zhang has innovative ideas but his strong and defiant personality worked against him. His fast promotion, despite it being well-deserved, invited jealousy in the military. All things together, Zhang Qinsheng was seen as unorthodox (*yi lei*) in the military," said one senior PLA officer to the author. Interview with an active-duty senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁴⁶ Interview with an active-duty senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁴⁷ This mentality of senior PLA officers is similar to that of government officials in China who only care about the GDP of the counties, cities or provinces they govern and move up step by step. They do not care about the international situations or the outside world.

²⁴⁸ Interview with a senior active-duty PLA officer, 2013.

²⁴⁹ Sun Jilian and Wei Wei, "Integrating into the World and Develop Itself: Interview with Major General Zhang Qinsheng, Dean of Military Campaign Studies under National Defense University," *PLA Daily*, September 17, 2001.

²⁵⁰ General Xiong Guangkai, General Zhang's immediate predecessor, opposed the PLA's active engagement in the Shangri-La Dialogue because of fears that this dialogue aimed at strategically constraining China and undermining China's influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Other worries included that allies and friends of the US, would gang up against China in such multilateral forums and why China participated such a one-sided dialogue in which it served no goals but American defense policy. Therefore, the PLA, though sending representatives since 2002, had maintained a low level participation represented by participants of division chief or bureau level till General Zhang Qinsheng took over Xiong's portfolio in 2007. In 2003 and 2004, the PLA did not sent any representative. See Yang Danzhi, "Shangri-La Dialogue: Origin, Characteristics, and Its Influence in the Asia-Pacific Region," *xian dai guo ji guan xi*, Issue 2 of 2006, p. 12; Goh Sui Noi, "Why Beijing Lies Low at Regional Security Forums," *Straits Times*, June

08/2006; Sun Ru, "Shangri-La Dialogue and the Sino-US Military Interaction," *xian dai guo ji guan xi*, Issue 6 of 2007, pp. 32-5.

²⁵¹ Before 2004-2005, the PLA had internal debates about whether the PLA should hold military exercises with foreign militaries because some argued that it violated China's policy of non-alignment and non-confrontation. Several principles were mentioned in the past when China explained the above policy: no stationing of Chinese troops overseas, no military bases overseas, no military cliques. The PLA was cautious about conducting large-scale joint military exercises with foreign militaries before 2004-2005 as many in the military worried that it could be interpreted as confrontational or forming military cliques. Naval Captain Liu Jiangping warned publicly in 2009 that continuing to adhere to non-alignment policy will cost the PLA precious "experience of fighting jointly with allied military" that the PLA lacked in the past half a century. Captain Liu resonated with General Zhang's point during the debate on the same subject back in 2004-2005. See Liu Jiangping, "We Must Change Concept and Adapt to Joint War-fighting With Allied Military," *huan qiu shi bao*, July 15, 2009, http://news.ifeng.com/mil/special/hpsm2009/comment/200907/0715_7236_1249975.shtml.

²⁵² Interview with a retired PLA officer, November 2014.

²⁵³ A senior active-duty PLA officer quoted Hu's words in the interview, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁵⁴ China was connected to Internet in 1994. By December 2007, China's Internet users totaled 210 million, slightly below the US (215 million). Two thirds of Chinese Internet users, by 2007, have published posts on the Internet that year. China's Internet users exceeded that of the US in 2008, reaching 253 million including 214 million users of broad band Internet. By 2010, China's Internet users reached 457 million and by 2013, 42% of Chinese (564 million) are Internet users. These figures are all based on the CNNIC reports released from 2007 to 2013, which could be found in www.cnnic.net.cn.

²⁵⁵ Chinese analysts wrote extensively about this subject. See Wang Jun, "Cyber Nationalism, Civil Society and China's Foreign Policy," *shi jie jing ji yu zheng zhi*, Issue 10 of 2010; Wang Cungang, "Chinese Public's Participation and Influence in China's Foreign Policy: Research Based on Three Case Studies in 2003," *wai jiao ping lun*, Issue 3 of 2010; Liu Jiangyong, "China's Japan Policy and Its Domestic Background," *Northeast Asia Forum*, Issue 5 of 2012; Li Xiguang and Qin Xuan, "Who Is Setting China's Agenda Today?: Reconstruction of Party Newspaper Agenda by Internet Forums In Crucial News Events," *xin wen yu chuan bo yan jiu*, Issue 3, Vol. 8, 2001, p. 61; Wang Jing, "The Iraq War and Chinese Public's Participation in China's Middle East Policy-making," *Arab World Studies*, Issue 4 of 2012; "Public Opinions and Government Foreign Policy Options," *shi jie zhi shi*, Issue 20 of 2012; Hua Yu, "Preliminary Study of The Influence of China's Cyber Nationalism on China's Political Legitimacy," *ki ji wen hui*, July 2012; Sun Zhangji, "The Factor of Public Media in China's Foreign Policy," *xiang chao*, Issue 259, Issue 4 of 2007;

²⁵⁶ This agency oversees both the Propaganda Department of the PLA GPD and the News Bureau of the Foreign Liaison Office of the PLA GSD.

²⁵⁷ The majority of the first group of experts designated to speak to the news media by this agency could not speak English or other foreign languages.

²⁵⁸ Zhao Zhigang, Zhang Pengfei and Wang Feifei, "Leapfrog Development of China's Military Propaganda to The Outside World," *dui wai chuan bo*, Issue 8 of 2009.

²⁵⁹ One exception was a moderate voice by Major General Xu Guangyu, a retired PLA GSD officer. He pointed out that the US made a compromise in this arms deal sale by not including submarine and Blackhawk helicopter. See "The US Getting Timid in Confrontations With China With Arms Sales 'Discounted'," *huan qiu shi bao*, January 08/2010.

²⁶⁰ Rear Admiral Yang denied in a conversation with the author that the exact wording came from himself but resulted from the work of editors of the newspaper. Also See "PLA Rear Admiral Advised Sanctioning American Companies Involved in the US Arms Sales to Taiwan," China News Agency, January 07/2010.

²⁶¹ Gao Youbin, "Netizens Exposed Businesses of Involved American Companies and Demanded Sanctions," *huan qiu shi bao*, December 15, 2009.

²⁶² John Pomfret, "U.S. sells weapons to Taiwan, angering China", *Washington Post*, January 30, 2010.

²⁶³ Interview with a PLA FAO officer, Beijing, summer of 2010.

²⁶⁴ Interviews with two PLA officers and one senior MFA diplomat, Beijing and Washington DC, 2010-13. The accounts from both the MFA and the PLA are same about why China cancelled the visit of Secretary Gates in 2010.

²⁶⁵ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

²⁶⁶ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

²⁶⁷ The PLA officers who received warnings allegedly included Maj. Gen. Luo Yuan, Rear Admiral Yang Yi and a few others.

²⁶⁸ Xiong made such statement when meeting with Taku Yamasaki, a former senior lawmaker of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party in April 2007. See "Xiong Guangkai: If Signs Seen, the Mainland Would Use Force," *zhong ping she*, April 29, 2007.

²⁶⁹ "Full Text of Anti-Secession Law," *Xinhua News Agency*, March 14, 2005, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2005-03/14/content_2694168.htm. For the full text of the law in English, see http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200503/14/eng20050314_176746.html.

²⁷⁰ Dai Bingguo, "Adhering to the Path of Peaceful Development," supplementary reading for the CCP Central Committee Proposal for Formulating the 12th Five-Year Plan for China's Economic and Social Development, December 13, 2010.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² Days after Ma's statement, Senior Colonel Li Jie, a respectable senior armament researcher at the PLA Institute for Naval Studies, explicitly stated "the Yellow Sea is pivotal to China's core interests given that it is related not only to the extension of the country's maritime rights and interests but also with its maritime security." In August 2010, the *PLA Daily* published two articles in a row implicitly claiming the Yellow Sea as one of China's core national interests. See Li Jie, "Navy Drill Cause for Concern," *China Daily*, July 12, 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2010-07/12/content_10091991.htm. Maj. Gen. (retired) Luo Yuan attacked the US's bullying tactics by sending the aircraft carrier to the Yellow Sea despite China's oppositions and "we will never be afraid of those countries which...ignore our core interests." See Luo Yuan, "Bullying Stands Behind Armed Demonstration," *PLA Daily*, August 12/2010. Rear Admiral (retired) Yang Yi wrote another article in the next day criticized the US for "on one hand demanding China to play a role in regional security and on the other hand containing China increasingly tightly and continuously challenging China's core interest." See Yang Yi, "Is China Overreacting or the US Accusing China Groundlessly?: Another Commentary on the US's Action of Sending Aircraft Carrier to Military Exercises in the Yellow Sea", *PLA Daily* August 13/2010.

²⁷³ The MFA spokesman stated "we resolutely oppose any activity of foreign military vehicles and aircrafts to conduct activities that impact China's *security interests* in the Yellow Sea and other near seas of China"²⁷³ (emphasis author's own). Apparently, the MFA and the PLA held different policy positions in terms of whether the Yellow Sea should be regarded as one of China's core interests and implicitly whether China should react strongly to the U.S.-South Korea military exercises. See "MFA Spokesman Qin Gang Held Regular Press Release on 15 July 2010," MFA's website, July 15, 2010, <http://vancouver.china-consulate.org/chn/fyrth/t717282.htm>.

²⁷⁴ Han Xudong, an associate professor at the PLA National Defense University, wrote in *Liaowang Magazine* in late July 2010 that national interests shall be prioritized and not all issues shall be included in the category of core national interests. Han advocated not specifying what China's core national interests are unless these interests could be protected effectively with military means. See Han Xudong, "Use of 'Core National Interests' Shall Be Cautioned," *liao wang magazine*, July 26, 2010.

²⁷⁵ Cheonan Incident occurred in 2009, in which a South Korean warship was exploded allegedly by the North Koreans with torpedo. As a result, the South Korean naval vessel, Cheonan, sunk. China waited almost a month to offer condolences to the deaths of South Korean sailors aboard the Cheonan. The sinking of the Cheonan triggered a series of crises on the Korean Peninsula including the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010. See John Pomfret, "U.S. debates joining S. Korean military exercises," *Washington Post*, June 19/2010; Scott Snyder and See-Won Byun, "The Northeast Asian Response to North Korea's Provocations," *RUSI Journal*, April/May 2011, 156, no. 2, pp. 74–81.

²⁷⁶ The PLA conducted its own investigation on the Cheonan Incident. Several senior PLA officers cited evidences such as the South Korean's refusal to allow independent Russian investigators access to its relevant military personnel, initial reactions and statements by South Korea contradicting with its later stance, and all the casualties in this incident were South Korean soldiers but no officers. A group of PLA officers strongly believed that the US had a pattern of past behaviors of creating incidents favorable to its cause which were revealed decades later to be a military campaign scheme. Not all officers agreed on this conviction and these opponents believed that the North Koreans indeed had a pattern of erratic behaviors

that warranted the US allegations. However, these opponents were divided into two camps, one believing that this incident was conducted by low-level North Korean officers without prior approval by their superior officers and the other camp who believed that under the North Korean system there was no possibility for such actions. In this debate, each camp within the PLA strongly believed their arguments and could not yield to other alternative arguments. Therefore, a consensus was built that the US conclusion was questionable and unacceptable. Interviews with several senior PLA officers involved in the decision-making of the PLA's response towards the Cheonan Incident, Beijing, 2011-2013

²⁷⁷ David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 175-6.

²⁷⁸ Shirley Kan, *US-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress*, RL-32496, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), p. 25.

²⁷⁹ "Jing Zhiyuan Departed Beijing to Visit Argentina and Chile," *PLA Daily*, November 29/2006; "Chile Defense Minister Meets Jing Zhiyuan," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 8, 2006.

²⁸⁰ Commander Jing Zhiyuan declined to go to the agreed nuclear talks in the US primarily because of his personal concerns about the sensitivity of these talks would do little good if they go well but possibly do great damages to his career if they go wrong, according to one interview in the PLA. Commander Jing was said to raise the request to visit the US three months before his retirement. However, it is against the routine of the PLA Foreign Liaison Office to follow initiatives of a senior PLA officer to launch new contacts with countries such as the US. Therefore, Jing's wish was never granted. Interview with a retired PLA officer, 2014.

²⁸¹ Eric Hagt, "China's ASAT Test: Strategic Response", *China Security*, Winter 2007.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Interview with Eric Hagt and a retired Chinese military space scientist, 2011-2012.

²⁸⁴ As the assessment predicted on the result of debris, which could have implication on international relations, it was most likely that MFA had to be brought into the deliberations and assessment, which PLA GAD understood held a negative position towards the military's ASAT program. In their minds, bringing in MFA would result in the disapproval of the ASAT test and therefore, they would do everything to exclude MFA from the decision-making chain.

²⁸⁵ Interview with Eric Hagt and a retired Chinese military space scientist, 2011-2012.

²⁸⁶ PLA GAD announced in the end of 2007 that J-20 (Institute 611) was the winner of bidding for China's fourth-generation fighter. From the announcement at the end of 2007 to the first successful test flight in January 2011, the developments of J-20 was most likely briefed to PLA GAD periodically. The test flight of J-20 shall be approved by both GAD and CMC in advance.

²⁸⁷ This conclusion was drawn based on multiple interviews the author conducted in 2011-2013 with current-duty PLA officers who were familiar with this incident.

²⁸⁸ Test flights for such advanced armament of the PLA would be kept confidential and a broad perimeter around the test location would be drawn to ensure confidentiality. Interview with a PLA officer familiar to test flights of new weapon systems, 2014.

²⁸⁹ At the end of the month of J-20's test flight, a detailed feature story about designers of J-20, its engine and test pilot was published. It was a highly unusual move by the weapon developers because of the sensitivity and secrecy of such advanced weapon programs. See "Reveal secrets about J-20 designers", *qianjiang wan bao*, January 31/2011, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2011-01-31/1116630886.html>.

²⁹⁰ This event was reported by Global Times and CCTV's Today's Focus program on the same day of the J-20's test flight. CCTV's programs are highly scrutinized for political correctness. The fact that CCTV still had a show on the J-20 test flight indicated that China's top leader could not or was reluctant to block the news about J-20 test flight despite it displeased Secretary Gates. See "Here it comes: China's J-20", CCTV's Today's Focus, transcript of the show was provided on 13 January 2011. The link could be found at <http://news.cntv.cn/program/jinriguanzhu/20110113/104325.shtml>.

²⁹¹ The conclusions were made, based on interviews with multiple PLA officers who specialize in military diplomacy the author conducted in 2011-2013. The author has not been able to interview those from Institute 611 to confirm these speculations.

²⁹² Institute 611, as an important defense contractor with orders to design and produce strategic weapon system, still receives "guidance for work" (*yewu zhidao*) from PLA GAD. However, they are not part of the PLA GAD and those scientists and engineers at Institute 611 do not belong to the military.

²⁹³ Interview with a senior PLA Navy officer, 2013.

Chapter Five: The PLA and the Civilian Foreign Affairs System: The Tale of Two Cultures

The last three chapters examined the PLA's drivers (Chapter 2) and the Party-military relationship (Chapter 3 and 4). The PLA is a military force in transition, with dynamics that could greatly impact the PLA's likelihood to intervene in or refrain from China's foreign and security policy-making process. The trends demonstrate that in the coming years the PLA will become increasingly outward-oriented, though it is still largely an inward-oriented military focused on China's internal challenges. Politicization will continuously weaken the PLA's efforts at professionalization and create an institutionalized disconnect between the PLA and the government. Professionalization, the dominant side of the politicization-professionalization dynamic, is a double-edged sword. While it elevates the principle of civilian centrality, at the same time it makes the PLA more budget-conscious, "no-war anxious," (explained in Chapter 2), and possibly more welcoming to continuous friction and even provoking a limited war in which the PLA believes there is a high probability that it will prevail. Inter-service rivalry within the PLA is reflected more through the differences between inland-based and coastal-oriented military regions, though the Navy and Air Force have expressed increased interests in more involvement in policies.

Having examined the Party-military relationship, it is clear that the top leadership's *political reliance* on the PLA's support and its ability to establish *effective control* over the PLA are the basis of the PLA's influence over policy-making. When the

top civilian leadership relies politically on the PLA, this provides an opening for the PLA to bargain for more influence. As a result, whether the top leadership can effectively control the PLA has a critical impact on its trust and confidence in the military, which impacts the extent to which the top leader gives access to the military. In other words, once effective control is established, the military becomes a strong power base for the leadership and naturally gains trust, access, and influence. When the civilian leadership is unable to establish effective control due to political interference, the military is treated not as a strong power base but rather as an impediment to the leader's power. The political leadership will then try to shrink the military's influence as much as possible. Therefore, once it is clear that the top leader relies on the military for political support, the degree of effective control is a key variable in determining the PLA's overall access to the top leader and the extent of the PLA's influence in policy areas. When the top leadership lacks effective control over the military, the military will indirectly resist the civilian leadership and hesitate to carry out the civilian leadership's policies, such as stalling the implementation of a policy contrary to their desire, or choosing the route of inaction by refusing to cooperate or consult with other policy actors.

The PLA's influence on foreign and security policy-making through the lens of the Party-military relationship is largely constrained to policy areas in which the top leaders' intervention is required. However, the top leader and his small circle of advisors do not weigh in on the majority of policy decisions.¹ China has developed a set of sophisticated and inclusive foreign and security policy-making mechanisms and platforms that reflect the interests of "stake-holders" – government agencies and actors that have an interest in policies under consideration. Most decisions in foreign and

security affairs are reached through a process of consensus-building and bureaucratic bargaining. As a part of this process, the PLA interacts and jockey for position with the civilian foreign affairs system. These next two chapters (Chapter 5 and 6) examine actors in the civilian foreign affairs system. These chapters seek to determine why those in the civilian foreign affairs system differ from their counterparts in the PLA with regards to policy positions, and how these two systems interact with each other. This chapter examines actors, as well as the differing cultures and bureaucratic power of the PLA and civilian foreign affairs system, and then explores what factors of the foreign and security policy-making process strengthen or weaken the PLA's bargaining position.

Actors in the Civilian Foreign Affairs System

The State Council and the Central Foreign Affairs Office, strictly speaking, are both part of the foreign policy coordination mechanism and are actors that lean predominantly toward the civilian foreign affairs system. The civilian bureaucracies that participate in foreign and security policies include the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Propaganda, and, on technical and functional matters, the Ministry of Transportation, State Oceanic Administration, United Front, Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office and General Customs, as well as some local governments that have an interest in China's relations with other countries and regions. However, for this analysis, the civilian foreign affairs system is composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the International Department (ID) of the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC), the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), the State Council and the Central Foreign Affairs Office (CFAO), and the second tier in terms of relevance to foreign policy which includes the Overseas Chinese Affairs

Office of the State Council and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council.² Even though these individual organizations compete with each other for influence, their positions on foreign and security policies are much more similar to each other than to the PLA's. Additionally, personnel rotations among these civilian organizations are common, whereas these civilian foreign affairs agencies and the PLA have almost no transfer of personnel.³

The civilian foreign affairs system stands in contrast with military and paramilitary agencies, namely the PLA, Ministry of Public Security (MPS), and Ministry of State Security (MSS), in terms of systems (kous) and policy positions. MPS and MSS both belong to the political and legal affairs system and answer to the Political and Legal Commission. This system is separate from the PLA and has substantial manpower and a comparable or even bigger budget.⁴ These three agencies generally share common concerns regarding security-related policies, though with respect to many mundane issues they fiercely compete and fight with each other.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) remains China's main government agency that oversees foreign affairs.⁵ As Lu Ning explains, MFA plays a leading role in the "tactical" aspects of policy-making through policy interpretation, policy control, and information provision.⁶ The top leadership formulates national strategic objectives, the guiding principles of foreign and security policy, as well as guidelines for handling critical "sensitive countries" or "sensitive" policy areas.⁷ While the top leadership ultimately decides China's approach to major strategic issues, the MFA "controls" the

process. It is tasked with researching and analyzing major foreign affairs issues, providing advice and policy recommendations, and implementing the leadership's decisions and policies. The MFA plays a "pivotal role" in China's foreign and security policy-making process by being the first responder to any incident with international ramifications, taking the lead role in inter-agency consultation and coordination, writing the initial memo on issues in question (though narration written by the MFA has to include opinions of other stakeholders) and briefing the top leaders before their meetings with foreign officials or their public appearances on the international stage.

MFA's Professionalization

The civilian foreign affairs system, as represented by the Foreign Minister or Deputy Premier or State Councilor overseeing foreign affairs, used to be headed by powerful heads, such as Zhou Enlai and Marshal Chen Yi in Mao's era. The power of these strong heads, on one hand, is expressed through personalistic, tighter control over the MFA, and on the other hand, helps enhance the MFA's authority of coordination and implementation as a bureaucracy. The civilian foreign affairs system in turn enjoys more authority in its interactions with strong policy actors such as the PLA.

The first generation of Foreign Ministers – Premier Zhou Enlai and Marshal Chen Yi – bound the MFA to the military, as their own identities and positions were dualistic. Foreign Ministers during the 1970s, who were old comrades of Mao and Deng and seasoned revolutionary soldiers themselves, enjoyed prestige and influence because of their political standing in the Party. The MFA, under Huang Hua (1976-82) and Wu Xueqian (1982-88), enjoyed substantial influence in China's foreign policy-making and

was a major player in policy coordination.⁸ During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the military, which was tarnished by Lin Biao's death and was derisively called "the military faction" due to its controversial role throughout the Cultural Revolution, had a disadvantageous position in Chinese politics. Due to the way the Cultural Revolution tarnished the PLA's image, the military's leaders were (and) are wary of intervening in politics.⁹ However, civilian leaders discounted such sentiments due to the military leadership's apparent political ambitions and past incidents.

Deng's policy of economic reform and opening up began the process by which the MFA has become a specialized and professionalized bureaucracy that has regularized the way it operates. By 1954, only nine countries outside the socialist bloc had forged diplomatic relations with China. However, China recalled almost all of its ambassadors in 1967 with the start of the Cultural Revolution (CR), except Ambassador Huang Hua in Egypt. In just the CR's first three months, 30 out of 49 countries with full or partial diplomatic relations with China found themselves in diplomatic disputes with China.¹⁰ China closed nine of its 14 embassies, while 24 out of 30 foreign embassies in China were closed.¹¹ Because of Chinese diplomats' increased fervor and radicalism, Tunisia and Kenya banished the Chinese ambassador or diplomatic representative.¹² By 1967, all Chinese ambassadors or diplomatic representatives but one had been recalled back to China.¹³ When Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev phoned the line of CCP Party Center to seek a conversation with Mao Zedong at the height of the 1969 Sino-Soviet border clash at Zhenbaodao (Treasure Island), the Chinese operator hung up on Brezhnev after calling him a "revisionist", which almost triggered a real war between China and the Soviet Union.¹⁴ China's diplomatic paralysis ended with Mao's death and the Gang of Four's

arrest in the mid-1970s. By 1978, when Deng announced the policy of reform and opening up, 112 countries had established diplomatic relations with China. By 2011, China had established diplomatic relations with 172 countries.¹⁵

The division of labor and specialization of each branch of the MFA, as well as the standardization of operational procedures, have made the MFA a much more professional but at the same time a highly bureaucratic agency.

First, as the MFA's departments and divisions become increasingly specialized, existing departments and divisions continue the division of labor while multiple new divisions and departments have been added to take on specific functions. During the two reforms introduced in the 1980s to streamline bureaucracies under the State Council, the MFA did not streamline but rather increased its division-level organs (*sijuji jigou*) to 37.¹⁶ New departments and divisions have been continuously added. For example, in 1997, Department of Arms Control and Disarmament (DACD) was established after non-proliferation became a focal point of frictions between China and the US. In 2004, the Department of Security Affairs (DSA) was established to respond to challenges of international terrorism. Its main responsibility is to deal with the diplomatic aspects of anti-separatism (Tibet and Xinjiang) and anti-terrorism both in China and abroad. As maritime and territorial disputes in the South China Sea intensified in 2008-2009 in Chinese perception,¹⁷ the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs (DBOA) was established in 2009 with two major responsibilities: border demarcation, joint inspection, stipulation of regulations on the border management system, and cooperative development in border regions; and the delimitation of China's maritime territory and joint development of maritime resources.¹⁸ In October 2012, the Department of

International Economy (DIE) was established. This department primarily focuses on economic diplomacy, and is tasked with devising an economic cooperation strategy and solving disputes that arise in international platforms such as the G20, BRICS, and APEC.¹⁹ The increasing specializations of departments within MFA helps to improve the professionalism of diplomats in their designated areas. Yet increased number of agencies under MFA has inevitably complicated intra-ministry cooperation in decision-making. For example, if Chinese workers are killed in Afghanistan, the DSA, along with the Department of Asian Affairs, will have to coordinate to handle the aftermath.²⁰ The Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs and the Department of Asian Affairs normally jointly handle any contingency related to the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Island dispute or South China Sea disputes.²¹

The MFA's preexisting departments have become increasingly segmented. For instance, the Department of North American and Oceanic Affairs (DNAOA) has at least three divisions focusing on the U.S. One division deals with the executive branch, one concentrates on Congress and U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the other focuses on multilateral affairs involving the U.S. such as nuclear disarmament negotiations. DNAOA also has its own research division, despite the existence of an MFA division that specializes in research.²²

Second, the MFA has also standardized its operational procedures, which has contributed to its professionalization. In the 1980s, then Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian established a regularized Morning Information Session or the "wind-blowing meeting" (*chui Fenghui*) in order to make sure that heads of various MFA divisions were informed of domestic and foreign developments (*dongtai*) well enough to make decisive and timely

decisions during contingencies. Collective decision-making and specialization of responsibility (*jiti juece, fengong fuze*) has since become the MFA's guiding principle. The MFA has continuously added new agencies to take on more specific professional responsibility in the areas of politics, economy, security, and culture, which has further bolstered its professionalization and specialization.²³

Pursuing professionalization, specialization, and the standardization of operational procedures, however, is expensive. In 2007, the MFA's staff exceeded 4,800, which is almost double the size of its staff in 1988 (2,526).²⁴ The MFA's budget increased to RMB 8.710 billion in 2014, from RMB 6.995 billion in 2013 and RMB 5.799 billion in 2012.²⁵ Nonetheless, MFA is not a strong government agency in terms of budgetary allocation. In comparison, the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) had a budget of RMB 25.758 billion in 2014, RMB 26.174 billion in 2013 and RMB 24.840 billion in 2012.²⁶ Moreover, China's budget for "public security" (stability maintenance) reached 701.8 billion yuan (actual expenditure reached 707.8 billion yuan) in 2012 and 769.1 billion in 2013, while the defense budget totaled 670.3 billion yuan in 2012 and 740.6 billion yuan in 2013.²⁷ The MFA's travel budget in 2015 was only 36 percent of the General Administration of Sport's, and was also lower than that of the Academy of Sciences.²⁸ The increasingly complicated organizational structure and standardization of procedures, notably briefings, reports, and memo writing -- lead to a vast amount of documentation, book logging, and memo writing on a regular basis.²⁹

How does the MFA work?

On foreign and security policies, the MFA follows one of two different reporting procedures, depending on the urgency and importance of the issue in question. Issues of great strategic importance and sensitivity that may lead to a major diplomatic crisis would follow the procedures outlined for contingency/crisis management. Such issues could be sent directly to the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) and even the top civilian leader, in order for the total decision cycle to end in a day or two.³⁰ However, the majority of issues, which do not reach this threshold of importance, follow a circuitous reporting procedure:

(possibly embassy --) division/department(s)-- Supervising Vice Foreign Minister -- Foreign Minister -- State Councilor on foreign affairs/Vice Premier with a portfolio of foreign affairs ---Premier -- Central Foreign Affairs Office/FALSG – (Politburo member whose portfolio has a stake in the issue) -- top leader.

Chinese bureaucracies follow a system of “countersignature” or “joint signature” (*huiqian*). For example, according to the Regulation on Party and Government Agencies Document Processing Work, if a ministry submits a request to the State Council for approval, it must first initiate a full consultation with the State Council’s relevant departments, if the matter involves other ministries’/departments’ authority.³¹ The sponsoring ministry/department is responsible for consultation and getting jointly countersigned approval from the State Council’s relevant ministries/departments, if its proposal encounters opposition or disagreement. If the consultation cannot result in agreement, the sponsoring ministry/department is required to list the differing positions

and rationales of all relevant parties, put forward recommendations, and get countersignatures from relevant departments before submitting it to the State Council.³² The MFA, as well as the PLA and other bureaucracies, follows the same procedure and regulation.

Functional departments/divisions (such as departments of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, Treaty and Law, and Arms Control) and regional divisions (such as departments of North American and Oceanian Affairs, and Asian Affairs) handle the major policy work at MFA. The work at regional departments in MFA is mainly “case work” (*ban'an*) and “research” (*diaoyan*). Staff at each department spend most of their time drafting two kinds of documents: “action memos” (*xingdong beiwanglu*) and “case record memos” (*fuo'an jilu*). “Section Chiefs” (*kezhang*) draft action memos after consulting with “Division Chiefs” (*chuzhang*). The division with the highest stakes will often become the lead agency to handle the issue. However, when an issue touches on multiple departments/divisions, which each have a similar stake in the issue, there is some randomness as to which agency will take the lead. Within the MFA, divisions are normally reluctant to assert themselves in taking the lead. Inter-division consultation determines which division leads on a given issue. They may take turns leading, or one agency will pass on responsibility if it is bombarded with another crisis. If the officials drafting a memo need the help or opinions of other departments at MFA, they will call the relevant offices to get their input. If those called on believe that this issue is so important that they need approval from their own chiefs, or if they have disagreements about how things should be handled, then the relevant departments hold inter-department meetings to handle disagreements.³³

When the department-level officials within the MFA can't come to an agreement during coordination meetings, the lead department will summarize and present its own opinion as well as the dissenting opinion to the Deputy Foreign Minister who as part of his portfolio oversees this type of matter. However, in most instances departments/divisions do not need to take this step and are able to coordinate with each other and find a way to reach agreement based on compromise.³⁴

When consensus is established, section chiefs will draft the action memo on behalf of his/her department. Such a memo will first be signed by his/her Department Chief, and will then be sent to the chiefs of other relevant departments for their signatures. The document will then be sent back to the drafting department, after which it will be presented to supervising vice foreign ministers and then the Foreign Minister for their signatures. Most decisions at the MFA follow this procedure.³⁵

Coordination among agencies within the PLA follows a pattern similar to the MFA's outlined above. It is very rare for an agency in its own system (both in the MFA and in the PLA) to just go ahead and force its opinion on others because "if it is taken that way, this agency could not expect others to cooperate in the implementation."³⁶ Though all bureaucracies follow the above common rule, the MFA differs notably from the PLA in terms of its bureaucratic culture: the MFA places more emphasis on consensus-building and agencies within the ministry are less likely to hold onto their departmental opinions, which is determined by its "flatter" organizational structure; the PLA's agencies at similar ranks are more separated from each other and are less likely to compromise their departmental opinions which mean the final decision normally has to be a "package deal", reflecting what each agency wants most.

A diplomatic incident could bring various departments within the MFA together. For example, a simple incident in Thailand involving a Chinese student drowning was reported to the Chinese embassy in Thailand. After investigation, the Thai police informed the embassy that the student's death was not a result of foul play, and therefore suggested to one Chinese consular official that the body should be cremated. For some reason, when the embassy attempted to relay this information to the MFA in Beijing and then the student's family, the news failed to reach the student's family in time. Therefore, by the time the student's family was informed of the news, the student's body had already been cremated. The student's family then issued a strong complaint against that responsible consular official. In this scenario, a plethora of departments inside the MFA would be involved in handling this case: the General Office of the MFA, the Department of Personnel, the Department of Consular Affairs, and the Department of Asian Affairs. Because this particular consular official held a relatively high rank, those involved in handling this dispute couldn't be below his rank, since otherwise it would have resulted in an awkward situation of having a junior official evaluating a senior official.³⁷

The specialization and division of responsibility of an increasingly professionalized MFA create issues of their own. The MFA's staff is preoccupied with trivial details, procedures, and writing and revising reports. The MFA's bureaucratic reporting and documentation work has become so burdensome that its staff has an aversion to new initiatives or deviations from its routine that may require more work, increased responsibility, and a heightened chance of failure.³⁸

Specialization doesn't completely eliminate the issue of overlapping responsibilities. For instance, the Bureau of General Studies under the Policy Planning

Department investigates and surveys international situations of strategic importance. However, the division in charge of the U.S. has its own branch that carries out the same mission.³⁹ The MFA, in the eyes of many outside actors, has become increasingly dogmatic, inefficient, and arrogant, and bureaucratic inertia has set in. The MFA is not viewed as an agency where strategic thinking takes place.⁴⁰

The MFA has institutionalized an inter-departmental coordination mechanism, which takes the form of mostly ad hoc, contingency-based task forces (*yingji xiaozu*). The primary function of these task forces is to devise work plans, establish liaison and communication procedures, open hotlines, collect information from all relevant entities, and coordinate with all relevant ministries/agencies.⁴¹ However, too many mechanisms have been created, while the MFA's number of personnel has remained relatively fixed. In addition to his or her routine workload, almost every staff member has to sit on a few of these task forces. Therefore, although coordination mechanisms exist, they are ineffective and not useful in handling pressing problems as soon as the crisis stage has passed. A diplomat at China's Embassy in Washington, D.C. described his average day as follows:

It is probably hard to imagine how heavy the workload for average MFA staff from the outside. I have to attend the so-called wind-blowing routine meeting every morning around 8:00, work until 6:30, and then I go back home to have dinner and play with my child for an hour. By 8:30 PM, I am back at my office again until 12:00 AM at least, and regularly until 2:00 AM. Then the next day, I have to be in the office again at 8:00 AM. My schedule in the embassy is quite a big break already compared to my colleagues back in Beijing, as my American counterparts normally don't work on (American) holidays or most weekends, unlike my Chinese colleagues back at home.

The MFA is perpetually short-handed and its staff is routinely overworked. Its senior staff's workload is even worse. As one of MFA's senior officials recounts:

Let me tell you a typical day when a crisis dawns on us in the MFA. We were having a late-night meeting to deal with a contingency in the East China Sea, attended by a few outside experts who specialize on Japan. Foreign Minister Wang Yi is a diligent man. The meeting, which started at 7:00 PM, dragged on until 11:30 PM. Then Wang Yi called a break. We were all relieved and ready to go. “Well, I need to have a quick jog to keep my mind clear. But don’t let me interrupt the discussion. Go on with the meeting!” Wang Yi said cheerfully. We all sighed and our hearts sunk. He went out of the meeting room to run for five minutes and the meeting continued. We left the building around 2:30 AM, knowing that we had to be back to our desk by 8:00 AM for the “wind-blowing meeting.”

The MFA established a Foreign Policy Advisory Group (*waijiao zhengce zixun weiyuanhui*) in 2008 that is dedicated to providing consultation and advice on international situations and diplomatic work as well as public diplomacy.⁴² As of 2015, its 29 members included 23 retired ambassadors and six outside scholars.⁴³ The MFA also invites mostly civilian experts and a few military analysts to regularly meet to provide their opinions on major foreign policies. Outside experts have some influence over issues such as China’s policy toward North Korea, especially when their opinions coincide with public opinion. However, interviews with a few outside experts as well as retired and active-duty officers, who attended such consultations at MFA, indicate that some of those who criticized and disagreed with the MFA’s policies were penalized and not invited back to subsequent meetings. A senior MFA official who once headed the Department of Policy Planning demonstrated a dismissive attitude toward these consultations with outside experts, stating, “We do invite outside experts to provide their opinions on certain issues, but in the end we expect the dialogues we set up influence their point of view much more than ours.”⁴⁴ Thus, the MFA has maintained a relatively insular culture, primarily relying on its own staff and its embedded research “muscle” to shape its positions, while consultations with outside experts exist but play a marginal role in shaping the MFA’s policy positions.

International Department of the Central Committee of the CCP

The International Department (ID) is one of several agencies that fall under the Party system.⁴⁵ ID was established primarily to handle the Party's relationship with other countries' Communist parties. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Communist bloc, ID has expanded its portfolio, building relationships with more than 600 political parties in 160 countries by 2012.⁴⁶

From the 1950s to the 1970s, China's diplomatic relations were mostly with other Communist countries.⁴⁷ During this period, the only Western countries that established diplomatic relations with China were France (1964) and Japan (1972). ID handled China's relationship with Communist countries, while the MFA was mostly responsible for China's relationship with non-Communist countries. Thus, given China's dearth of diplomatic relationships, the MFA had little work. ID, dubbed the "Party's Foreign Ministry" that dealt with relations with other Communist countries, was more important than the MFA. The ID maintained a seat as Secretary or Alternate Secretary of the Secretariat until the 1980s. From the 1970s to the 1990s, high-ranking officials such as Geng Biao (1971-79), Ji Pengfei (1979-82), and Qiao Shi (1982-83) led the ID. Wu Xueqian, a Politburo member and Vice Premier in charge of foreign affairs in the late 1980s, accumulated his foreign policy experience through a decade of work in the ID (1972-82). Qiao Shi, the former Minister of the ID, was elevated onto the PBSC in the 1990s. Prior to 2000, four of the ID's ministers and most of its vice ministers, including Wu Xueqian, Qiao Shi, and Qian Liren, were associated with the pre-1949 underground resistance movement in Shanghai. As a result, ID, despite the perception that it was a

“Party” organ closed to the outside world, maintained a down-to-earth, moderate and pro-reform internal culture.⁴⁸

After President Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, the MFA’s portfolio and importance started to increase rapidly. By comparison, the Soviet Union’s implosion and the collapse of the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s drastically reduced the ID’s portfolio and its political importance declined in absolute terms in the 1990s. In the two decades following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ID has tried to reinvent itself to develop relations with different parties and parliaments/congresses of non-socialist countries.

The ID’s political fortunes improved during Hu’s era. As Jiang’s heir apparent and the PBSC member with a portfolio that included managing the Party’s affairs, Hu began to build his influence in ID. Dai Bingguo, Hu’s close associate, became the ID’s head in August 1997.⁴⁹ After Hu ascended to the position of General Secretary of the CCP in 2002, ID was treated as the better of the two “Foreign Ministries.” Hu allegedly distrusted Foreign Ministers Li Zhaoxing and Yang Jiechi, and thus preferred the cadres cultivated from ID to those from the MFA.⁵⁰ In January 2003, North Korea withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which intensified its frictions with China, particularly with the MFA, as this agency was a strong advocate of non-proliferation and arms control. With regards to North Korea, the MFA and ID divide their portfolios based on international implications: MFA handles China’s relationship with South Korea, the Six-Party Talks, and all international consultations regarding the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while ID handles China’s relationship with North Korea. North Korea has persistently held a grudge against MFA, and in 2003 refused to communicate with

China through the MFA,⁵¹ which North Korea perceived was twisting its arm during negotiations.⁵² Dai, then head of the ID, was “airlifted” to the MFA by Hu, and named Executive Vice Foreign Minister (with all the privileges of a full Minister), later becoming Party Secretary of the MFA in May 2003. Dai was brought in to navigate this crisis and handle North Korea. Under Dai’s leadership, in 2003 China initiated the Six-Party Talks, marking the first time that China deviated from its long-held principle of non-interference, and led and participated in major regional security talks as a way to dissipate international tensions. Dai was also the key person initiating, planning and executing the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s trip to China in 2006.⁵³ When Tang Jiaxuan retired, Dai was elevated to the position of State Councilor on Foreign Affairs (2008-13). Besides its prominent role in handling China’s bilateral relationship with North Korea, ID played a more active role than the MFA in coordinating Hu’s visit to North Korea and Vietnam in 2005 and promoting Hu’s July 1st speech to 158 diplomats in 2011.⁵⁴ However, the promotion and transfer of ID cadres to MFA and other bureaucracies, rather than the expansion of ID’s portfolio, reflects its increased importance under Hu.

ID’s recovery under Hu was mostly likely transient.⁵⁵ In addition to unfavorable personnel moves, the ID, one of North Korea’s strongest advocates in Beijing, has been further weakened as China gradually takes a tougher stance in restraining North Korea’s nuclear program. Even with China’s shifting policy toward North Korea, its bilateral relationship with the country is the only area where the ID has retained its influence. The ID has hosted a majority of North Korea’s supreme leaders’ visits and remains the most crucial link between the two countries. On several occasions, North Korea snubbed or

expressed its distrust of MFA officials, who are indispensable representing China's interests in six-party talks, to communicate its message to Chinese leaders, particularly with regards to the denuclearization negotiations.⁵⁶

ID normally occupies one seat on the FALSG, and with its chiefs and deputy chiefs rotating through the MFA and TAO, it still holds significant political power. However, since both MFA and TAO have been given wide-ranging portfolios that touch on strategic issues, whereas ID has not, in the long-run ID lacks the potential and capability to compete with either of these organizations.

Central Foreign Affairs Office (CFAO) of the CCP Central Committee

The Central Foreign Affairs Office of the CCP Central Committee (CFAO, *zhongyang waishi bangongshi*), is the executive office that serves three masters, the FALSG, the National Security Leading Small Group, and the Maritime Rights & Interests Leading Small Group. CFAO grew out of the State Council Foreign Affairs office, a government agency that was reinstated in 1981. CFAO plays the role of secretary, coordinator, researcher, and largely an agenda-setter.⁵⁷ In administrative status, CFAO is treated as having the level of a full ministry, but in official administrative rank it is higher than any ministry under the State Council.

The Director of CFAO's power and mandate have fluctuated greatly since the organization's establishment. Liu Huaqiu, the former Director of the State Council Central Foreign Affairs Office, was the first director of CFAO, serving between 1998 and 2005. During his tenure as Director of CFAO, Liu was overshadowed by his long-term political rival, Vice Premier Qian Qichen, who was the Deputy Head of the FALSG. The

Director of CFAO's power has increased exponentially since 2005, due to political jockeying between Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.⁵⁸ In 2003, Qian retired and was replaced by Zeng Qinghong, the Vice President and Jiang's close advisor. To outmaneuver Jiang, Hu hollowed out the position of Deputy Director of FALSG and delegated its power to the Administrative Director of FALSG, i.e., Director of CFAO, which Dai, who was a key Hu ally, occupied since 2005.⁵⁹ Director of the CFAO, which is the executive arm of the FALSG, thus held high confidence of the top leader, prestige and substantial power in foreign affairs in 2005-2012.

Although traditionally directors and deputy directors of CFAO were chosen from among government officials, one exception was Chen Xiaogong, former Assistant Chief of General Staff of the PLA, who was made Deputy Director of CFAO. However, Chen's selection was not due to an institutional arrangement. Rather, this was a one-time deal that was made because CFAO had a shortage of staff and Chen's father (Chen Chu), the former Chinese Ambassador to Japan, used to head CFAO.⁶⁰ The PLA's autonomy, which ensures that CFAO has no opportunity to interfere with military affairs, accounts for the distinct personnel appointment between CFAO, under the Party system, and the PLA.⁶¹

CFAO is an executive arm of the FALSG and handles the FALSG's day-to-day work and logistics. CFAO was made a powerful organ under Ji Pengfei, the longest-serving Vice Foreign Minister, who had a wide network of protégés in the MFA. His Deputy, Chen Chu, a former Ambassador to Japan and the UN, also helped extend CFAO's power and influence. However, CFAO was seriously weakened after 1989, because its Director, Wu Xueqian, was a close associate of Hu Yaobang, and his son was

arrested for his involvement in the student movement. When Qian Qichen was in power, who for a time held the position of both Foreign Minister and Vice Premier overseeing foreign affairs, overshadowing Liu Huaqiu, CFAO's role was largely diminished.⁶² This situation didn't improve until Hu took power. Since Zeng Qinghong, Hu's political rival, was deputy head of the FALSG (until 2007), Hu balanced the FALSG by elevating the role of CFAO and its director, who at that time was Dai Bingguo. Under Dai, CFAO's influence in the foreign policy arena was restored, to a certain extent at the MFA's expense. However, CFAO's power did not reach its pre-1989 level, as Dai was never a Politburo member, since he lacked credentials in the Party and the governmental system, even after becoming a State Councilor on foreign affairs.⁶³ Dai's successor, Yang Jiechi, the former Foreign Minister, is also not a Politburo member, nor a Vice Premier.

According to its official mandate, CFAO is not endowed with great influence in foreign and security policy-making. Yet in reality CFAO is important because it acts as a gatekeeper, regulating almost all non-military traffic and information that goes to top policymakers, including members of the Politburo, the PBSC, and the top political leader. CFAO commissions reports and studies to governmental research institutions, such as China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), a subsidiary research arm of the Ministry of State Security. CFAO is also important because of its close proximity to the top political leader. CFAO deals with all the approval procedures and sometimes schedules the agenda of foreign visits of those with the status of "Party and national leaders," or all those with Politburo membership. Therefore, CFAO has the "ears" of the Politburo members, the most important of which is the top political leader.

Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) of the State Council/CCP Central Committee

The Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) of the State Council is an administrative agency responsible for setting and implementing guidelines and policies related to Taiwan.⁶⁴ As an agency under the State Council, TAO is also the executive arm of the Party's Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG) which therefore subjects TAO to the CCP Central Committee. Therefore, TAO is an agency of “one organ, two signboards” (*yige jigou, liangkuai paizi*), an agency both under the State Council and under the Party.

The reason of the TAO's “dual-personality” comes from both the history and the function of this agency. Between 1949 and 1966, a Central Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Leading Group led Mainland's policy towards Taiwan. During this period, the PLA had jurisdiction over the Taiwan policy because the cross-Strait relationship was characterized as “struggles with enemies,” the step yet to be taken to complete China's revolution, and therefore “liberation” by use of force. Directly led by Zhou Enlai, this group included members from military operations (PLA GSD Operations Department), military intelligence (PLA GSD 2nd and 3rd Department), military political warfare (PLA GPD/Liaison Department), state intelligence and counterespionage (Department of Investigation which in 1990s transformed into Ministry of State Security), United Front Work Department (political warfare).⁶⁵ This organization became dysfunctional due to the chaos created by the Cultural Revolution but was resumed in December 1979 under the leadership of Deng Yingchao, Zhou's widow and Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. An executive arm, Taiwan Affairs Office under the Party, was established to serve this organization. With Taiwanese allowed to travel to

China to visit their families or as tourists beginning in November 1987, a new line of work was opened. A Party organization like TAO could not cope with the amount of work and the nature of people-to-people exchanges as well as relevant coordination with local government. In 1988, the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) of the State Council was established, headed by Ding Guangen.⁶⁶ The organization set up corresponding offices at each level of the government, which were dedicated to improving people-to-people communications and trade/investment across the Taiwan Strait. In 1993, TAO of the CCPCC and TAO of the State Council were combined into one office, but kept separate names. Through this integration, Jiang Zemin in essence returned Taiwan policy-making to the Party system.⁶⁷

Because of the institutional history, TAO has staff from mainly three backgrounds: MFA, the PLA and local governments. From 1987 to 2000, PLA officers consistently had prominent positions on TAO, starting with Lieutenant General Yang Side, a highly decorated military intelligence officer who spent most of his career in the PLA GPD. Yang headed the newly-revived TAO of the CCPCC, serving from 1985 to 1987.⁶⁸ Other notable PLA officers who served in TAO included Wang Zaixi, a senior military intelligence officer, who was deputy director of TAO from 2000-2006 and Li Qingzhou, TAO's spokesman and Assistant to Director of TAO. In Hu's era, the PLA officers, though still placed in TAO, occupied lower positions.⁶⁹ TAO officials with MFA background such as Director Wang Yi and Deputy Directors Sun Xiaoyu and Tang Shubei. In terms of backgrounds, significant numbers of the TAO staff came from local provinces, such as Chen Yunlin, Li Bingcai and Zheng Lizhong, who had rich experiences and expertise facilitating Taiwanese investment at the provincial level.⁷⁰

Because of historical legacy and overlapping personnel background, TAO has maintained close institutional relations with the PLA and MFA.⁷¹ Although TAO was established with a strong connection to the PLA, it has always maintained a cordial and productive working relationship with MFA. The Department of Macao, Hong Kong and Taiwan Affairs under the MFA supports TAO by executing the international dimension of the policies that TAO sets. TAO's working style is very different from MFA's. Whereas the MFA has a highly bureaucratic, insular and formally institutionalized culture, the TAO of the State Council operates very differently.⁷² When TAO of State Council was established in 1988, people-to-people communication across the Taiwan Strait had already been well-developed. Therefore, upon its establishment, TAO absorbed a large number of civilian scholars/practitioners from outside the system, and has always relied heavily on the opinions and advice of these scholars/practitioners.⁷³

In terms of political power, resources, and talent, TAO is a late-starter and a weaker player in Chinese bureaucratic politics. Although it has traditional ties to the PLA, TAO has kept a non-competitive attitude with the MFA. Officials also rotate frequently between MFA and TAO, in order to increase these officials' expertise and bolster their resumes. This has contributed to the harmony between the two government agencies.

State Council

Both the MFA and the Ministry of Defense (MND) are housed within the government system led by the State Council. The State Council is a coordinating mechanism as well as an actor in foreign affairs in that it supervises the MFA's work. The State Council, established in 1954,⁷⁴ is bestowed with the power to "administer

foreign affairs and forge treaties and agreements with foreign countries,” according to China’s Constitution.⁷⁵

Throughout China’s history, officials have taken leadership positions concurrently in both the State Council and the MFA. Prior to 1978, high-profile leaders led the MFA, which lent authority to the organization. Zhou Enlai, the Premier who also headed the State Council, held the position of Foreign Minister concurrently with the Premiership (1949-58). Marshal Chen Yi, as Vice Premier, succeeded Zhou as the second Foreign Minister (1958-72). After Chen, four foreign ministers, Ji Pengfei (1972-74), Huang Hua (1976-82), Wu Xueqian (1982-88) and Qian Qichen (1988-98), were elevated to the positions of Vice Premier or State Counselor overseeing foreign affairs after their tenures as Foreign Minister.⁷⁶ Only Wu Xueqian (1985-92) and Qian Qichen (1992-2002) moved on to become Politburo members.⁷⁷

The position of State Councilor was created in 1982 during an institutional reform. State councilors, according to the State Council Organizational Law, assist the premier by taking charge of “work of particular areas or significant specialized tasks.” State councilors enjoy an administrative status of Vice Premier, but their political ranking and prestige is always behind that of the Vice Premier. Wu Xueqian, who served as the Foreign Minister from 1982-88, was the first State Councilor on foreign affairs (1983-88).⁷⁸ In 1988, Wu became the Vice Premier overseeing foreign affairs (1988-93) and the Deputy Director of the FALSG and the TALSG.⁷⁹ However, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (1988-98) played a more dominant role in foreign affairs and quickly rose to the Politburo in 1992.⁸⁰ Qian, who then became Vice Premier in 1993, was an exceptional case.

After Qian was promoted to Vice Premier and therefore vacated his position as Foreign Minister in 1998, the Foreign Minister's status in China's foreign policy-making hierarchy has declined.⁸¹ China's foreign ministers no longer hold the position of state councilor concurrently, and therefore are no longer officially included in the State Council's important Regular Work Meetings. By comparison, all defense ministers, as state councilors, are automatically part of this important meeting mechanism. Following Qian's retirement in 2002, diplomats no longer have any representative sitting on the Politburo, while the PLA has two.

Since 2003, state councilors on foreign affairs have consistently ranked behind defense ministers and the Minister of Public Security, who are automatically slotted in as state councilors. For example, Tang Jiaxuan was the third-ranking State Councilor (2003-08) behind Zhou Yongkang, then Minister of Public Security, and General Cao Gangchuan, the Defense Minister and member of the Politburo. Dai Bingguo was the fifth and the last-ranking state councilor (2008-12), while General Liang Guanglie, the Defense Minister and a State Councilor, ranked second among the five. Yang Jiechi, as a State Councilor on foreign affairs (2012-) ranked after Defense Minister Chang Wanquan.

Since the state councilor on foreign affairs reports to the premier, as stipulated by the State Council's administrative procedures, the premier is a natural link in the deliberation and formulation of major foreign policies, although his main responsibility is to focus on economic policies. Some premiers are more interested in foreign affairs than others. Zhao Ziyang (Premier, 1980-88), and Li Peng (Premier, 1988-98) were both heavily constrained by Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, and Yao Yilin in deciding economic policies. As premier, Zhao was even more constrained than Li in the foreign policy arena

because Li Xiannian, a conservative elder, was heading the FALSG (1981-88) and Deng was more hands-on in foreign policy in the 1980s than in the 1990s. Premier Li presided over the FALSG between 1988 and 1997, and therefore had more scope get involved in foreign affairs. Later, neither Premier Zhu Rongji (1998-2003) nor Premier Wen Jiabao (2003-13) was particularly attentive to foreign affairs, despite continuous efforts to increase research capabilities within the State Council system.⁸²

The State Council provides platforms for the civilian foreign affairs system and the military to coordinate on specific issues. As of 2014, a total of 29 inter-agency coordination mechanisms have been set up under its umbrella, which are called “Advisory and Coordinating Organs.” These Advisory and Coordinating Organs are created mainly under four circumstances: when there is an important issue that requires cross-region, cross-agency work and takes so much coordination that no agency can handle it alone (i.e. State Commission of Border and Coastal Defense); when an issue concerns civil-military cooperation (i.e. National Defense Mobilization Committee); when an issue involves long-term public contingencies and natural disasters (i.e. State Council Headquarters for Resisting Earthquakes and Providing Disaster Relief); and when an issue has important international ramifications or garners high public visibility (i.e. National Leading Group for Climate Change, Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction). Among the 29 Advisory and Coordinating Organs, the PLA directly assumes the leading role of four of them: National Defense Mobilization Committee,⁸³ State Commission of Border and Coastal Defense,⁸⁴ Air Traffic Control Committee of the State Council⁸⁵ and the Central Military Commission, and the Leading Group for the Development of Army-People Relations.⁸⁶ The PLA also participates in 15 other

Advisory and Coordinating Organs, such as earthquake relief, informatization/cyber, flood control and drought relief, forestation, protection of disabled people, National Energy Commission, work safety, AIDS prevention, demobilization (veteran placement), drug prohibition, and prevention of forest fires. The only Advisory and Coordinating Organ where the MFA and PLA work closely together is the PLA-led State Commission of Border and Coastal Defense (CBCD), as indicated by an Assistant Foreign Minister-level official's participation. The executive office of CBCD is housed under the Division of Operations of the General Staff Department.

Besides the long-term Advisory and Coordinating Organs, the State Council also has contingency-based, short-term coordinating mechanisms, which serve specific tasks and often disband after the mission is deemed to have been accomplished. Examples of such coordinating mechanisms include the minister-level Coordinating Task Force on Emergent Incidents and Contingency in Foreign Affairs (*shewai jinji tufa shijian xietiao xiaozu*) and the Inter-agency Joint Meetings for Protection of Chinese Citizens and Institutions Overseas (*jingwai zhongguo gongmin he jigou anquan baohu gongzuo buji lianxi huiyi*). These inter-agency coordination mechanisms played critical roles in China's response to a series of foreign contingencies, including the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya in 2011.

Even though both the Foreign Minister and the Defense Minister serve under the State Council, it has failed to be an effective platform for the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system to coordinate. China's Defense Minister, unless he concurrently serves as CMC Vice Chairman, lacks substantial power in the military⁸⁷ and is not part of the military's chain of command. On the other hand, a Defense Minister who is

concurrently CMC Vice Chairman (and therefore a Politburo member), such as Cao Gangchuan, outranks all other state councilors and therefore in practice would not answer to coordination through the State Council. In other words, if a Defense Minister is weak, nobody in the military will listen to him; conversely, if a Defense Minister is very powerful, he wouldn't want to use the State Council as a platform for coordination. Therefore, the State Council is unable to serve as an effective coordination mechanism between the military and the civilian foreign affairs system.

Dynamics of the Rise and Fall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Analysts have continually been perplexed as to why the MFA's political standing in Chinese politics, defined by both its bureaucratic power and the political status of its leader, the Foreign Minister, has fallen continuously since 1978, even though China's international prestige, overseas interests, and actual participation and engagement in international affairs have all grown exponentially. Such a decline has been even more apparent since 1998, when Qian Qichen was promoted to Vice Premier, and Tang Jiaxuan succeeded him as Foreign Minister. Beginning with Tang, successive Foreign Ministers have never concurrently been elevated to State Councilor.

There are two ways to examine the Foreign Minister's bureaucratic power and status in China's domestic politics: administrative level, and ranking in the Party. The Foreign Minister's bureaucratic rank equals that of a Minister or of a provincial governor-level official. There are a total of 55 ministry-level agencies directly under the State Council. China, on average, has between 195-400 minister-level officials, excluding those serving in the People's Congress or the CPPCC.⁸⁸ Thus, China's Foreign Minister,

if he is not also a Politburo member or a State Councilor, is just one of hundreds of officials of the same rank. Seen another way, the Foreign Minister is only one of over 200 Central Committee members in the Party. The Foreign Minister's bureaucratic rank is roughly the same as an army-grade (*junji*) PLA officer, which falls two levels below that of the CMC Vice Chairman.⁸⁹ The Deputy Chief of the General Staff in charge of military diplomacy, often the Foreign Minister's interlocutor, typically holds a position of Military Region Deputy (*fuda junqun ji*), which is one rank above the army grade. Therefore, China's Foreign Minister, strictly speaking, is one rank lower than his counterpart in the PLA. In terms of ranking in the Party, after Qian Qichen retired in 2002, the top diplomat, the State Councilor on Foreign Affairs, has a lower political ranking than the top soldier(s), both CMC Vice Chairman, who are Politburo members.

A few reasons can be offered to explain the MFA's continual weakening:

First, the diversification of control over foreign affairs expanded the MFA's sphere of power but at the same time weakened the strength of its power. In the 1980s, Deng identified economic reform and opening-up as the country's core mission, which enabled the MFA to play a supportive role in achieving this central strategic goal. In the 1990s, China's overseas interests vastly expanded as the country turned itself into the "workshop of the world." As China modernized and embraced globalization, it increasingly engaged with foreign countries across all dimensions. The scope of China's foreign affairs and interactions has grown to such a great volume, become so complex, and crossed into so many areas that the MFA could not keep up. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as the MFA professionalized, it expanded. However, the expansion and

specification of the MFA's responsibilities has been outpaced by the growth of branches and various ministries that dealt with foreign affairs. As David M. Lampton has concluded, decentralization constituted one of the most important trends of China's foreign policy-making.⁹⁰ The MFA's monopoly over foreign affairs was quickly eaten up by other ministries, which, unlike the MFA, have the real power.

China's approach to climate change negotiations illustrates the MFA's weakening position relative to other bureaucracies. Since 1998, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), an extremely powerful but domestically oriented bureaucracy, has led China's participation in international climate change negotiations because China views climate change as fundamentally a development issue rather than one of international affairs, though China's progress in climate change has significant international ramifications. Xie Zhenhua, Deputy Director of the NDRC, was China's chief negotiator at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit and generally conducted China's negotiations on climate change principally through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The NDRC has been the most powerful bureaucracy under the State Council, as it is responsible for studying, developing, and setting strategic policies related to economic and social development, including China's Five-Year Plans. Its power is also reflected in its authority in coordination and regulation of energy prices, a highly lucrative area that affects many large state-owned enterprises. Even with Premier Wen Jiabao's attendance at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit, the differences between the NDRC and MFA, ranging from negotiation strategy to policy substance, were so stark that even Wen could not make the two reach a consensus. Throughout the negotiations in Copenhagen, the NDRC was the leading actor on the

Chinese side, though the MFA “put on an uncompromising stern face” and was eventually the target of international and domestic criticism due to the summit’s failure.⁹¹ In other words, the NDRC, neither experienced nor savvy in dealing with other countries and international organizations, controlled the substantive aspects of the negotiations, while the MFA handled its formalities.

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) has also undermined the MFA’s policies and encroached on its territory. The MPS is the principal police and security agency under the State Council, which is ultimately responsible for day-to-day law enforcement. The MPS’s mandate is expansive, covering everything from traffic control, firefighting and fire prevention inspection, residency identity card (*hukou*) management and crime investigations, to combating terrorism, fighting civil unrest and subversive activities, anti-smuggling, anti-drug trafficking, and filtering and monitoring the Internet. Though traditionally seen as an “inward-looking” bureaucracy, MPS has become another new actor in foreign affairs. Despite its overwhelming focus on protecting China’s social stability and its citizens’ safety, MPS’s mandate has started to expand to include operations overseas, primarily because more Chinese businesses and citizens are operating abroad. By the end of 2004, Chinese-funded enterprises that operate overseas totaled 8,000, while 1,900 Chinese organizations had established overseas branches, and the Chinese government had sent more than 130 foreign aid task forces on overseas missions.⁹² In 2004, over 600,000 Chinese citizens were working in nearly 200 countries on construction and reconstruction projects, medical assistance, and investment and contracting, while 40,000 Chinese citizens were engaged in offshore fishing. From 1949 to 1979, only 280,000 Chinese went abroad. In 2014, the number of out- and in-bound

Chinese citizens reached 233 million, representing 18.7% increase over the previous period.⁹³ As one senior MPS officer put it:

MPS's job is to protect Chinese citizens' safety and the country's economic interests. As far as our interests and our citizens go, as far as our protection would try to extend to. It is not hard to understand that a traditionally 'inward-looking' bureaucracy like MPS starts to venture outside China's border. We indeed have many more citizens living overseas and a great number of enterprises go overseas to do business than 30 years ago. We train tens of senior foreign law-enforcement officers from countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan each year in MPS. The purpose is simple. We need local police support when our citizens or businesses abroad are attacked. Now the next step is to raise a force to provide protection and safety for our citizens overseas, something like Blackwater of the U.S.⁹⁴

As of late 2011, MPS started to operate outside of China's borders in order to protect Chinese citizens' safety and China's overseas interests. MPS launched joint patrols with Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar along the Mekong River in response to the highly-publicized murder of 13 Chinese sailors on Thailand's portion of the river. Thus, MFA inevitably has to deal with MPS, given its continually increasing ambition and mandate to operate overseas.

What the MPS lacks in experience with international cooperation, knowledge about and proficiency in how to operate under international law, and awareness of possible international implications of its actions, it makes up for with strong bureaucratic power that MFA lacks. The MPS's position of strategic importance, as it is tasked with maintaining China's domestic stability, endows the agency with vast bureaucratic power. As part of this mandate, the MPS oversees a nationwide, top-down network of Public Security Bureaus that employs 1.7 million police personnel.⁹⁵ Additionally, the MPS can use coercion and force to impose its will, levy both physical and economic punishment, and penetrate into the daily lives of average people. MPS's bureaucratic weight in domestic politics makes it an actor that non-security bureaucracies, such as the MFA, often choose to avoid or defer to during turf battles.

MPS caused a diplomatic dispute with multiple countries when it issued newly-designed Chinese passports in 2012. These passports featured a Chinese map in its pages that included the Nine-Dashed Line as well as disputed areas on the China-India border.⁹⁶ The implication was that China was claiming sovereignty over disputed territorial features. Although this was believed to be an act initiated and carried out by low-level MPS officials, who were penalized afterwards, this incident indicated how little coordination there is between MPS and MFA, as well as other bureaucracies' ability to undermine MFA's diplomatic efforts.⁹⁷ In comparison, China's diplomatic passports do not feature the same map, indicating the discord between these two agencies.⁹⁸

Lu Ning, in his book, "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking in China," correctly points out, "China's reorientation of its focus on economic development" is a primary reason for the gradual erosion of the MFA's predominant role in managing China's foreign affairs."⁹⁹ This was especially important after the death of Zhou Enlai, who was MFA's "chief patron."¹⁰⁰ MFA, though still first among equals, "has lost the exclusiveness of its access to the central leadership," and "has to compete for their hearts and minds with an increasing number of bureaucracies with vested interests that have entered the field of foreign affairs."¹⁰¹ Lu Ning also provides other reasonable explanations for the MFA's erosion of influence, such as the growing complexity of China's relations with the rest of the world, which overwhelmed the MFA and drove it to delegate some of its tasks to other bureaucracies.¹⁰²

Second, China is a country ultimately controlled by the Party, whose primary concern is to secure the stability of its rule. Due to the pressing need for economic development and social stability, which directly impacts the Party's legitimacy and the

stability of its rule, foreign affairs were not a high priority for China's top leaders during the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰³ Therefore, China's leaders put much more emphasis on providing good governance and strong economic growth, as well as maintain social stability. As Jeffrey Bader, a former U.S. NSC official who dealt with China observed, to Chinese leaders "Foreign affairs by far are simply a nuisance."¹⁰⁴ Foreign affairs have declined significantly in the Party's political considerations in terms of strategic importance since 1980s and more drastically since end of 1990s, which is then reflected in the Foreign Minister's low political standing in the Party. MFA's decline in authority is also revealed by the gradual encroachment of other bureaucracies into MFA's mandates. For example, the Ministry of State Security had originally been banned by Deng Xiaoping from occupying cover posts in diplomatic missions,¹⁰⁵ a taboo apparently broken in Jiang's era.

Third, in the process of decentralizing power in the policy-making arena, which as David M. Lampton has pointed out is an increasing trend,¹⁰⁶ China's bureaucracies gained actual power and benefits unevenly. Since China started the process of reform and opening up in the early 1980s, the government has devoted much of its attention and resources to economic development and modernization. Concurrently, domestic stability, still a top priority, has become more challenging to ensure because of broader internal migration and the development of anonymous communication methods for groups. Therefore, those holding the power of resource allocation (the People's Bank of China and Ministry of Finance), granting access and approvals (NRDC), carrying out inspections and supervision (Ministry of Environmental Protection), enforcing laws and administrative control, or maintaining stability (Ministry of Public Security and the

Ministry of Transportation) have real power (*shiquan*). These bureaucracies have become increasingly powerful in China's political landscape and have gained more political advantages as China's politics became more democratic and pluralized over the past three decades. The MFA is labeled one of the "disadvantaged groups" (*ruoshi qunti*) in Chinese domestic politics, according to a scholar affiliated with the CCP Central Party School.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, despite its high visibility to the outside world, the MFA holds relatively weaker bargaining power once those domestically powerful bureaucracies find legitimacy and motivation to enter the policy process.

Lastly, Foreign Ministers after Qian were politically much weaker because they either lacked political credentials or the top leader's trust. Past foreign ministers who enjoyed a high political ranking had long and distinguished careers in the military, Party affairs, and especially in the pre-1949 revolutionary struggles, and thus forged strong relationships with a wide network of powerful cadres. Wu Xueqian, for example, worked as a leader of the student movement within the CCP underground resistance in Shanghai from 1939-49, where he forged a solid relationship with members of the China Youth League and ID such as Hu Yaobang and Qiao Shi, who would later become prominent political figures. Interview with a PLA officer, 2013. After Wu Xueqian, Qian Qichen dominated China's civilian foreign affairs system under Jiang. Qian, a Foreign Minister (1988-98), member of the Politburo (1992-2002), and Vice Premier (1993-2003), was the rare example of a professional diplomat who was promoted onto the Politburo. Qian's fast-track promotion was largely a result of his ability to break the comprehensive economic sanctions the West imposed on China following the Tiananmen Incident.

A weak foreign minister has consequences for the entire MFA in terms of weaker position in inter-agency coordination and weaker influence on top leadership. Tang Jiaxuan, Qian's successor as Foreign Minister (1998-2003) and then State Councilor for foreign affairs (2003-2007), was overshadowed by his predecessor. Tang only had experience as a one-dimensional Japan specialist, and rose from humble beginnings as an interpreter at MFA. During his tenure, Hu had difficulties trusting his foreign ministers, such as Li Zhaoxing and Yang Jiechi. Li Zhaoxing, the Foreign Minister (2003-07) under Hu Jintao and Qian's protégé, with high-profile family connections,¹⁰⁸ was never trusted by Hu or included in Hu's small circle of advisors. Hu relied on neither Li nor Tang in molding his own foreign policy thinking. In November 2003, Zheng Bijian, former Vice President of the Central Party School and Hu's advisor, made a speech entitled "China's New Path of Peaceful Rise and Asia's Future" at the Boao Forum. A month later, Hu explicitly stated that China would stick to the development path of a "peaceful rise" in a speech commemorating the 110th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth. During the 10th study session of the Politburo in February 2004, Hu again emphasized the theme of a "peaceful rise" and China's independent foreign policy of peace. "Peaceful rise" was actively advocated as China's national development strategy from 2003 to 2005, but was replaced with "peaceful development" in 2006-07 due to criticism from inside the Party and from the PLA. Li Zhaoxing was one of the critical voices of Hu's "peaceful rise" narrative.¹⁰⁹

Hu also resented Foreign Minister Li because Hu's 2006 visit to the U.S. was filled with diplomatic mishaps, with Falungong member protesting during Hu's press conference, and the U.S. government representative referring to the PRC as the ROC

(Taiwan). Hu also resented Li because the U.S. did not give him a state dinner during his visit. Li was abruptly removed from his position as Foreign Minister in 2007, before he finished serving his five-year term. Li failed to be promoted to State Councilor on foreign affairs as his predecessors. Dai Bingguo, a close associate of Hu Jintao, replaced Tang Jiaxuan in 2008.

Yang Jiechi, previously an interpreter and a relatively one-dimensional professional diplomat with experiences concentrating on the U.S., ascended to the position of Foreign Minister after Li's premature departure. In the MFA, which is increasingly defined by its rising professionalization, the common perception, right or wrong, is that a diplomat will be less respected if he/she only has expertise only in handling bilateral relations and has not served in the capacity of conducting multilateral negotiations or serving in international organizations.¹¹⁰

Hu did not have sufficient trust in Yang Jiechi, because either Hu believed that Jiang Zemin lobbied for his nomination,¹¹¹ or there was too much criticism of Yang domestically for lacking diplomatic vision and skill. Despite Hu's reservations, he could not rule Yang out. Therefore, Hu took two measures: first, he reestablished the ID's importance as the alternative voice in foreign affairs; second, he emphasized the State Councilor's importance and encouraged the State Councilor's active role on foreign affairs, which was the position that Dai occupied. Given Hu's poor relationship with Yang, Dai was the real driver of China's foreign policy from 2008-12.

A senior former U.S. official observed that during top-level meetings Hu attended with other heads of state, "he was always seen to sit with Wang Huning on one hand and Ling Jihua on the other hand. Even Dai Bingguo sat far down the table. Yang's seat was

even further.”¹¹² Further evidence in support of this observation is that when Chinese news media reported on Hu’s visits to foreign countries, it more often introduced his delegation as, “also included in the visiting delegations are Ling Jihua, Wang Huning, Dai Bingguo and others.”¹¹³ Ling and Wang, Secretaries of the CCP Secretariat, were Hu’s two gatekeepers. Thus, their power came from their ability to control the access of people and information to Hu. Yang would still be the one to write memos and brief Hu on talking points before Hu’s meetings with any major foreign delegation. However, Hu relied much less on Yang than on Dai in terms of foreign policy-making.

Xi has more power and control over the government than Hu had, and also takes a different approach to handling foreign affairs.¹¹⁴ Under Xi, Yang replaced Dai as State Councilor on foreign affairs. However, Yang has less power in this position than Dai had. One example of Yang’s lack of power as State Councilor relative to Dai’s can be found in that fact that Yang was neither given the position of Executive Director of the National Security Commission (NSC) nor has occupied an important seat at the NSC. Li Zhanshu, Director of General Office and Executive Director of NSC, instead of Yang Jiechi, the officially top diplomat, went to meet Russian President Putin on Xi’s behalf in March 2015 to pave the road for Xi’s upcoming visit to Moscow in May 2015. This could be explained by a practice repeatedly used during the CCP’s power struggles, whereby someone is officially promoted to a higher status, but in reality is demoted and sidelined (*gaogao juqi, qingqing fangxia*) as his real power is stripped away.¹¹⁵

Sources of Differences Between the Civilian Foreign Affairs System and the PLA

The civilian-military divide in policies are not just pertinent to China. Bismarck once observed that “many officers considered all things outside the army ‘as alien enemies.’”¹¹⁶ The differences in policy opinions and positions between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system primarily stem from three sources: differences in threat perceptions resulting from differences in their mandates; differences in bureaucratic interests, as the PLA priorities in gaining strategic advantages and security interests, while the MFA looks to prevent and solve, diplomatic “problems” as quickly as possible; and differences in cost/benefit calculations, stemming from differences in their expertise.

Disagreements between the MFA and PLA on substantive policy issues largely result from their respective missions, which cause the organizations to notably diverge. The MFA serves to solve problems, disputes, and disagreements. The PLA is designed to prepare for worst-case scenarios and wars. Differences in mandates determine the differences in threat perceptions between the PLA and MFA. Each has a unique role to play. However, their differing bureaucratic missions and functions lead the MFA and PLA to clash on policy prescriptions. As one active-duty PLA officer asserts:

MFA seeks to maintain stability and please all parties. It has a distinctive role of “putting out fire,” so its work has a short-term perspective. An analogy could be made like this: If China is surrounded by four people, MFA will seek to be good friends with them all. However, the military has to establish an imaginary enemy, so it has to decide which one it needs to target. Therefore, the military has to think with more long-term, strategic angles. China does not have a National Security Council like the U.S. to coordinate positions, unify things and delegate roles to different agencies. (Chinese) Leaders will listen to opinions expressed by MFA and the PLA separately. (Therefore, how much influence each one could have on the leaders) depends on personal relations rather than on an institutionalized decision-making procedure. That is why China’s security policy-making suffers from “schizophrenia,” which means diplomats and soldiers disagree with each other and they carry on and implement what they believe.¹¹⁷

Although China established a National Security Commission in 2013, a forum that probably allows soldiers and diplomats to present their thinking to the supreme leader at the same table, their differences in positions are unlikely to decrease. The PLA, like other

militaries, looks at any problem from the standpoint of whether this constitutes an existing or potential military threat to China. On the other hand, the MFA handles diplomatic relations with other countries, and in most cases wants to avoid confrontation and maintain positive relations. The PLA is more sensitive to capability, concrete gains, and strategic assets, and is less attuned than the MFA to rhetoric and ideology. Many in the PLA quietly disagreed with the MFA's resistance to engaging in human rights dialogues that the U.S. and Europe initiated in the wake of Tiananmen. Those in the MFA objected on the grounds that the West's intention was to undermine the Party's power and bring about democratization or "peaceful evolution." One senior PLA officer summed up the PLA's dissent as follows:

Doesn't China have its own human rights problems? While being so defensive and arguing to whitewash its poor human rights record after 1989, MFA should have directed all of its efforts and political capital toward gaining some concrete benefits. The MFA failed to assert itself in areas crucial to China's national interests, but overreacted when it should have been "softer" and more attentive to outside criticism.¹¹⁸

The PLA has certainly different opinions about China's human rights conditions. However, it has a broad consensus on focusing China's diplomatic efforts on tangible gains to enhance China's security and strategic positions rather than wasting international political capital on ideological fights. The PLA had long protested more strongly and more unanimously what it perceived to be the MFA's "inactions" in protecting China's maritime interests in the 1980s, as well as its proclivity to compromise in territorial negotiations with Vietnam. Many PLA officers' disagreements with MFA's post-1989 diplomatic approach were never incorporated into the PLA's official position. This is due to the fact that articulating this perspective would seem like a challenge to the Party. Additionally, at this time Yang Baibing was in the midst of carrying out a campaign to

ideologically cleanse the PLA, which put it under heightened scrutiny and caused it to be more reluctant to take a vocal stance on issues.

The PLA's disagreement with the MFA was more evident in China's relations with Japan from 1993-96, when China and Japan quarreled over Japan's revision of its history textbooks and Japan's cabinet members' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. In 1994, Japan's Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano made inflammatory statements, calling the 1937 Rape of Nanking a fabrication and denying that Japan was guilty of aggression in World War II.¹¹⁹ However, while the average Chinese citizen was outraged by these Japanese officials' comments and actions, the PLA viewed the Sino-Japanese disputes over history as primarily a political issue. Therefore, the PLA took a much more moderate position toward Japan in the 1990s in comparison to that of MFA, China's media, and its public.

As one PLA officer remarked:

China's biggest security threat right now and in the near future is the United States. The U.S. does not want to see Taiwan go back to China. So it could pull the part that hurts China most when needed. The only way that the U.S. could dominate Asia as a great power physically far away from Asia is by dividing Japan and China. A Chinese idiom says, "when the snipe and the clam grapple, it is the fisherman who profits." If China and Japan keep a sore relationship, who wins? It is the United States. Even fools can see that.¹²⁰

This quote is illustrative of most senior PLA officers and strategists, who could be roughly characterized as "doves to Japan and hawks to the U.S."¹²¹ Given this strategic perspective and evaluation of potential threats, the PLA was more inclined to take a moderate position toward Japan in 1990s, in order to counter how it believed the U.S. could leverage its relationship with Japan to dominate the Asia-Pacific region.¹²²

However, the MFA acted much tougher towards Japan because of disputes over history books and Japanese politicians' visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine - where 14 Class-A war criminals including Hideki Tojo are honored.¹²³

The PLA's position toward Japan gradually shifted after the revision of the "U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines" in 1997, which expanded the U.S.-Japan alliance's scope to cover the Taiwan Strait and its vicinity. The PLA started to perceive that Japan posed a bigger threat to its interests. As one senior PLA officer pointed out, "to whom the (PLA's) guns point depend where the perceived military threats are."¹²⁴ Such an accumulative threat perception led to the PLA officers' increasingly tough stance toward Japan. In spite of all the political downturns and open quarrels between China and Japan, the PLA's engagement with Japan's Self-Defense Forces was still ahead of the two countries' political relations in many aspects.¹²⁵

Once an issue does arise, the military will assess and handle the problem from the perspective of a potential or imminent threat, while diplomats instinctively put off the issue for as long as possible. Therefore, in diplomats' eyes, the PLA often plays up a threat unnecessarily, while the PLA sees the MFA as locked in the habit of avoiding "troubles" due to its lack of a strategic vision. Although both the PLA and MFA genuinely believe they themselves, not the other agency, represent China's true national interests, mandates and expertise orient the two bureaucracies differently when looking at the same threat.

One example illustrates the diverging perspectives of the military and the civilian foreign affairs system: the disagreement between the two organizations on Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratification. CTBT ratification, as well as arms control and disarmament issues more generally, constitutes an area in which the MFA and PLA have consistent and distinctive differences. When China was deliberating whether to ratify the CTBT in 2009-10, the MFA proposed that in order to occupy the

moral high ground, China should ratify the CTBT regardless of whether the U.S. did so. At this point in time, China had been under severe pressure both domestically and internationally. A series of civil unrest incidents in 2008¹²⁶ and the July Urumqi Riot in 2009 reinforced China's sense of vulnerability despite decades of economic prosperity.¹²⁷ China's neighbors were anxious, as the 2008 global financial crisis hit the U.S. economy hard, while China's economy was only slightly affected. The Sino-U.S. discord exacerbated the pressure on China, ranging from the 2010 U.S.-ROK joint naval exercises in the Yellow Sea, to the U.S.'s changing position on territorial disputes in the South China Sea.¹²⁸ Consequentially, China felt other powers were ganging up against it and overreacted, which only made neighboring countries more worried about China's assertiveness.¹²⁹

The MFA's approach was to relieve the international pressure on China and demonstrate the goodwill of a stronger China by making concessions on arms control issues. Hu Jintao consulted Qian Shaojun, a first-generation nuclear scientist with the PLA General Armament Department and a core figure behind China's nuclear posture until 2011. Qian eloquently articulated the PLA's position that it did not oppose ratifying the CTBT, but advised that China hold off until the U.S. ratified it. Qian explained, "to better protect its national security interests, China should not spin a cocoon around itself (getting enmeshed in a trap of its own devising), as the U.S. may ratify the CTBT with conditions and may even restart its nuclear tests after China's ratification of CTBT."¹³⁰

In the end, the military's cautious, "wait and see" approach toward the CTBT prevailed. When facing the "Global Zero" nuclear-free world initiative that the U.S. and Russia

pushed in 2009-10, the PLA once again disagreed with the MFA on whether China should start to participate in the nuclear disarmament negotiations. There are still deep divisions inside the PLA on how to react to such efforts that seek to achieve complete nuclear disarmament. The more progressive side believes that China should actively participate in any forum that advocates nuclear disarmament such as “Global Zero,” in order to proactively explain China’s nuclear policy and shape the international debate. At the same time, this side cautions restraint, asserting that China should not participate in official disarmament negotiations until the U.S. and Russia reduce their nuclear arsenals significantly. The more conservative side asserts that “no response” is a better response, and that the PLA should accelerate its efforts to expand China’s nuclear stockpile, and strengthen its nuclear survivability and penetration capability. Yet the conservative side recognizes that nuclear disarmament negotiations are probably inevitable and may benefit China’s own security interests. Their logic is that if the U.S. and Russia cut their nuclear stockpiles at a pace much faster than China does, and if the progress of the U.S. missile defense system can be capped through the same negotiations, then China’s nuclear deterrent will be strengthened.¹³¹

The MFA is not the only civilian agency that the PLA has disagreements with. When the MFA forms alliances with other agencies, its opposition within the government often vocalizes its opposition more loudly and attempts to constrain the PLA. After Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou came to power in 2008, many Chinese civilian experts and officials close to TAO made strong calls to freeze and reduce China’s deployment of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM) in the coastal area of Fujian Province, which lies directly opposite Taiwan and threatens it. Despite the Second Artillery’s (responsible for

deploying these missiles) instinctive resistance to this proposal, the PLA in fact agreed to this proposal and halted any new orders of these missiles. However, those missiles already purchased by the PLA were on track to be deployed as planned. “The revision of the deployment of these already purchased missiles was extremely difficult, literally impossible,” said a senior PLA officer.¹³² However, the PLA refused to publicly announce its decision to forego any further purchases of missiles to be deployed against Taiwan, due to “operational procedure.”¹³³ Therefore, outsiders believed that the PLA was unresponsive to the détente between the mainland and Taiwan. In reality, the PLA is a huge machine that takes longer to shift gears, especially when there are divisions inside the PLA.

Budgetary considerations are argued by many PLA officers as a “secondary” source for the differences in policy positions between the PLA and MFA. It is in the military’s institutional interest to strive for a bigger budget and be better equipped and prepared militarily. The PLA’s budgetary concern is exacerbated by the increasingly intense competition for resources between the PLA Navy and PLA Air Force as the PLA Navy emphasizes the importance of aircraft carriers and submarines, while the PLA Air Force advocates the “absolute necessity” of deploying strategic bombers for China’s security.¹³⁴

From 1978 to 1996, the PLA’s budget was essentially stagnant. During the 1980s, Deng invested limited economic resources into the economy and told the military to bear hardships and wait their turn. In the early 1990s, the military felt neglected and lobbied for a higher budget. The PLA budget began to rise under Jiang, but real improvements in officer’s salaries and the military’s welfare did not come until Hu’s era. As Senior

Colonel Dai Xu, a PLA Air Force analyst well-known to the outside world for his hardline views toward the U.S. said, “PLA officers’ salaries did not improve significantly until Hu was in power. My salary as a regiment-level officer did not rise to 1,700 Yuan by 2009.¹³⁵ Now (in the summer of 2011¹³⁶) I am earning 6,000 Yuan after a sweeping raise of salaries for officers.”¹³⁷ Monthly salaries of major generals and rear admirals rose to 10,000 Yuan in 2011, slightly higher than civil servants of a similar administrative level.¹³⁸

Several retired and active-duty PLA officers pointed to the 2000s as the most favorable environment for the PLA’s development, as “the military always wishes for a certain level of tensions short of opening fires so it can draw more attention from the Party leaders and the public.” Yet this period might be coming to an end. The PLA’s budget is likely to face more downward pressure as the Chinese economy begins to slow down. PLA officers also realize that during peaceful times it is more difficult to convince the public of its need for continuing budget increases. Very few PLA officers interviewed by the author acknowledged this problem and expressed their worries about the Chinese media’s “pre-WWII war-mongering fascist” mentality of pushing China into wars, which pressured PLA officers take a more hard-lined position.¹³⁹ “It is as if a PLA officer isn’t a qualified officer (in the eyes of Chinese media) if he (she) does not talk about going into wars when talking about frictions with other countries. This public sentiment is in some degree radicalizing some PLA officers, or at least their public positions. That is a deadly trend” (*hen yao ming de qu shi*), commented one PLA officer.¹⁴⁰ One plausible scenario is that the PLA’s bureaucratic interests will be met as long as China goes to war, even if it loses that war. If the PLA wins the war, it gains both military victory and high acclaim

from the Chinese public. If it loses a war, Chinese leaders will rush to give the PLA more money, in order to strengthen the military's capability and ensure that it wins any future war. Therefore, the PLA as an institution can't lose if the leader chooses to go to war.¹⁴¹

Most PLA officers dismiss the view that budget considerations dictate the PLA's policy positions.¹⁴² Rather, these officers insist that threat perception has a much stronger influence over the PLA's policy positions. When issues pose an imminent military threat to China or contradict the PLA's existing principles, the PLA is driven to take action, and the budget is a much lower concern. Additionally, to support the above argument, the budget for purchases of big-ticket weapons systems and ships from foreign countries "does not come from the official defense budget but from discretionary funding earned through penalties by the (Administration of General) Customs and their seizure of smuggling worth hundreds of billions."¹⁴³

The last source of differences between soldiers and diplomats is regarding the different calculus they use in evaluating situations. The military evaluates values and risks in a distinctly different way than do civilians. Therefore, they bargain harder for assets that potentially give them great military advantages, while bending over and compromising with greater ease on issues they believe have little military utility. Diplomats tend to base their assessment on a broader range of issues, such as regional stability, the nation's reputation and ideology, and the impact that a policy will have on counties that are strategically important to China. The military values long-term strategic victories, even if this means short-term tactical losses. In contrast, diplomats tend to focus on short-term wins and deliverables, and solving issues that reach their desks. The military may see opportunities from a crisis, while diplomats see more crises arising from

a given crisis. As one PLA analyst who had a long career serving in the Shenyang Military Region (opposite North Korea) remarked, “A grave crisis on the Korean Peninsular might not be the worst scenario (for the PLA). If great instability is caused by external forces or regime collapse appears in North Korea, it is most likely that the PLA will enter North Korea to first secure the nuclear stockpiles. Many of us believe that it won’t stop there but seize the port at the narrowest ‘waist’ of North Korea¹⁴⁴ that will open the PLA Navy to the Japan Sea.”¹⁴⁵

This particular PLA officer’s view may not be representative of the PLA in general. He may not even be representative of those in the Shenyang Military Region. But his approach of analysis was distinctly different from that of analysts from MFA or other civilian agencies, who tend to emphasize regional stability and the goal of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. A MFA’s analyst typically emphasizes how a destabilized North Korea would have disastrous consequences, including Japan’s rearmament, the increased deployment of the U.S. military in Northeast Asia, and the fallout of the Sino-U.S. relationship as both sides lose a major point of cooperation. ID analysts worry more about the survival of North Korea’s regime and the potential blow to the Communist movement and the ID’s own survival as an agency if its Communist regime falls.

It would be wrong to view the PLA as a player always advocating for war and confrontation, and the MFA as consistently pushing for peace and compromise. The Chinese public in general mistakenly views the MFA as “weak” and “prone to surrendering to the West.” The MFA’s core interest is in maintaining stability and solving problems to the best of its ability. For example, the establishment of Sansha City in

Hainan Province, a provocative move in the eyes of the Philippines, was a result of the MFA's long-existing, pre-set plan (*yu'an*). The PLA Navy has shown restraint in cases such as the Sino-Philippine standoff over Huangyan Island (Scarborough Shoal), in which the PLA believes they have a clear military advantage. In cases such as the East China Sea dispute, in which the PLA does not have a clear military advantage, the PLA followed an even more cautious route. For example, the PLA senior commanders expressed extreme caution towards sending military planes or ships into the 12 nautical mile territorial waters surrounding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, though it supports the activities undertaken by the paramilitary forces under the State Oceanic Administration to push the envelope.¹⁴⁶

¹ The policy questions which fall under top leader's purview were discussed at page 4 of Chapter 3. These issues are those that are of strategic significance to China's core national interests and overall international well-being, namely Sino-U.S. relations and cross-Straits (Taiwan) relations, regional security issues that impact great power relations (South and East China Seas, North Korea), contingencies that have direct bearing on the imminent threat of wars (such as the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999), and major foreign policy issues where interagency (including the military) differences exist and no consensus can be reached (such as the Sino-Philippine Scarborough Shoal standoff in 2012).

² The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office and the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office are omitted in the discussions about China's civilian foreign affairs system as they are both less relevant to China's foreign and security policy-making.

³ Ji Pengfei, China's third Foreign Minister, became the head of International Department (ID) of the CCPCC after his tenure as FM. Wu Xueqian was "airlifted" from ID to become the sixth FM. Dai Bingguo became Vice Foreign Minister and the Party Secretary of Foreign Ministry after serving as the head of ID. Dai moved on to become the State Councilor on foreign affairs. Zhang Zhijun, deputy head of ID, became the Vice Foreign Minister and then the head of Taiwan Affairs Office. Wang Yi became the head of Taiwan Affairs Office before stepping in the position of FM. Liu Yieyi, Assistant Foreign Minister, was later transferred to become deputy head of ID.

⁴ China's public security budget exceeded its defense budget for the first time in 2009. However, the real expenditure on public security (514 billion yuan) was still lower than the defense expenditure that year. In 2010, public security budget reached 510 billion yuan, but the actual expenditure on public security totaled 550 billion yuan, while China's official defense budget in 2010 reached 532.1 billion yuan, 17.9 billion yuan short compared to public security expenditure. Since 2010, China's public security expenditure has always been higher than its defense budget. China's budget for "public security" (stability maintenance) reached 701.8 billion yuan (actual expenditure reached 707.8 billion yuan) in 2012 and 769.1 billion in 2013 while defense budget totalled 670.3 billion yuan and 740.6 billion yuan in 2013. See "China's Defense Budget and Stability Maintenance Budget Rising, But Public Security Higher Than Defense Budget," RFI Chinese, June 3, 2013; Chen Zhifen, "China's Defense Budget and Expenditure of 'Stability Maintenance'", BBC Chinese, March 5, 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2014/03/140305_ana_china_npc_army; Xiong Chuandong,

“How Deep the Bottomless Pit of the Pricey ‘Stability Maintenance’?” *Guangming Daily*, June 09/2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/observation/2010-06/09/c_13341139.htm.

⁵ Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies, State Council Ministries, and Party Departments,” in David M. Lampton (ed.) *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978- 2000*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 39-60.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lu Ning interpreted “key countries” as those “of strategic importance in world affairs” such as the U.S., Russia and Japan and those “of geographical importance to China” such as “Korea, Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), India, Pakistan and Kazakhstan and Mongolia. “Sensitive countries” include Israel, South Korea, and South Africa in the 1980s. Sensitive policy areas include policies of wider implications in functional terms such as arms exports in the 1980s. Even though the sensitive countries and sensitive issues are the prerogative of the central leadership, MFA has to control the overall processes and make “tactical” decisions in handling these relationships. Key and sensitive countries as well as sensitive policy areas evolve as times goes on. The concept Lu Ning lays out still applies in 2000s though the substance of “key” and “sensitive countries” as well as sensitive policy areas are adjusted based on China’s strategic interests and development priorities. The determination of China’s key and sensitive countries as well as sensitive policy areas, the author argues, is reflected in the importance and priority the top leader attaches through the frequency and length of his visits and summits as well as the expressed significance of China’s relations with these countries or on certain policy areas. Key countries as of 2015, arguably, include the U.S., Russia, and Germany and to a lesser degree India, Japan, South Korea (ROK) and Brazil. Sensitive countries include North Korea (DPRK), Burma, and Pakistan. Sensitive policy areas include energy security, and global and regional financial cooperation. See Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership”; Liu Jing’s Interview with Jin Canrong: China Is Promoting A Two-pillar Grand Diplomatic Strategy,” February 27, 2015, Economic and Financial Channel of Phoenix Satellite TV, <http://finance.ifeng.com/news/special/SinoUSrelations4/>.

⁸ Wu Xueqian made great contributions to the policy of “one country, two systems,” publicly coined by Deng Xiaoping. Interview with Wu Xueqian’s son, Phoenix Satellite TV, April 11, 2008; “Wu Xueqian, Former Vice Premier, Dies at 87,” *lian he bao*, April 8, 2008.

⁹ Interview with a senior official of the Foreign Ministry, January 27, 2013.

¹⁰ Deng Shujie and Li Mei, ed., *Turning Points: Detailed Explanation of Major Historic Events of China* (Changchun, Jilin yinxiang chubanshe, 2005).

¹¹ Countries including Sri Lanka, Burma, India, Mongolia, and the Soviet Union had serious frictions with Chinese diplomats. See Huang Hua, “Ridiculous Diplomacy during the Cultural Revolution,” in *Living History and Information: Memoir of Huang Hua* (Beijing, shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2007). An electronic version of this section could be found at: http://www.21ccom.net/articles/history/xiandai/20141205117132_all.html.

¹² Kong Dongmei, *Days of Changing the World: Discussions with Wang Hairong about Mao Zedong’s Diplomatic Stories* (Beijing, zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2006).

¹³ Huang Hua, then Ambassador to Egypt, was the only Chinese Ambassador who did not return to China in 1967. Huang returned in 1969 instead. See Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998), pp. 12–3; also Huang Hua, “Ridiculous Diplomacy during the Cultural Revolution,” in *Living History*.

¹⁴ After the border clash between the PLA and the Soviet army in Zhenbaodao in 1969, Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Union, sought to call Chairman Mao by phone to avoid a bigger armed conflict. As Chinese Embassy in Moscow was in total disarray, Brezhnev called the general line (*zongji*) of the CCP Party Center (*zhonggong zhongyang*). Brezhnev started by saying: “I am Brezhnev. Please connect me with Chairman Mao.” The Chinese operator replied, “Revisionist! What thing are you? How could you speak to our great leader?” (*xiuzheng zhuyi fenzi! Ni shi shenme dongxi? Neng zhao wo men weida lingxiu jianghua*). Then the operator hung up the phone. It took another several months before the Soviet and Chinese leaders opened the channel for communications, which almost caused a real war between China and the Soviet Union. However, this young operator was praised for “high-level political consciousness” by Kang Sheng, an element of the radical group. This episode was recounted by Huang Hua, former Foreign Minister of China. It wasn’t until September 1969 that Premier Zhou Enlai met with the Soviet Prime

Minister Kosygin at Beijing airport and reached the agreement on returning ambassadors previously recalled for better communications. See Huang Hua, "Ridiculous Diplomacy" in Living History.

¹⁵ "List of PRC's Establishment of Diplomatic Relations with Other Countries," Last Updated on 28 February 2015, MFA Website, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/ziliao_611306/2193_611376/.

¹⁶ Organization Department, Central Archives, and Party History Research Center of the CCP Central Committee, ed., *CCP Organization History Information (Volume of Central Government)*, Volume II, (Beijing, zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 2000), pp. 759.

¹⁷ Chinese officials of Maritime and Fishery Administration in Hainan Province accused Vietnam, since 2009, of having systematically sent out organized armed ships and fishing boats to seize China's fishery and maritime resources. China and Vietnam especially mutual expelled, detained, and confiscated each other's civilian fishing boats. Chinese fishery administration officials believed these incidents in which Chinese fishermen were harassed, detained and robbed in disputed areas had become increasingly frequent and in systematic and organized manner in broader areas. From 1989 to 2010, about 750 Chinese fishing boats in South China Sea were either harassed or detained, according to Chinese statistics. From 2005 to 2010, China confiscated 63 foreign fishing boats and arrested 725 foreign fishermen, half from Vietnam. See "Chinese Fishermen Confronting Foreign Warships," *guoji xianqu daobao*, June 17, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/herald/2011-06/17/c_13933347.htm; Li Mingjun, "Future Development Trend of South China Sea Disputes and Our Responses," Taiwan Think Tank, Issue 24, <http://www.taiwanthinktank.org/chinese/page/6/66/2927/0>; Lei Zhihua, "Political Cost of Fisheries Disputes", *nan feng chuang*, Issue 12 of 2012, June 08, 2012, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/qqsww/zlwj/article_2012060861498.html.

¹⁸ "Interview with Ouyang Yujing," *CRI*, February 20, 2013, <http://gb.cri.cn/news/other/wjdt/>.

¹⁹ "Start of economic diplomacy with the establishment of Department of International Economy under MFA", *Xiaokang Magazine*, Issue 11 of 2012, <http://www.zcom.com/article/88744/>.

²⁰ "Protection of China's overseas interests: MFA newly established Department of Security Affairs", *Chinese Newsweek*, July 5, 2004, Issue 186, <http://www.chinanews.com/news/2004year/2004-07-05/26/455854.shtml>.

²¹ Interview with an official at MFA, Beijing, 2012.

²² Interview with a MFA diplomat, Washington DC, 2013.

²³ Gong Li, Men Honghua, and Sun Dongfang, "China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution in 1949-2009," *World Economics and Politics* 11 (2009), http://www.21ccom.net/articles/qqsww/zlwj/article_2013010674404_2.html.

²⁴ "Li Zhaoxing: MFA Has More Than 4800 Cadres," *Xinhua News*, March 6, 2007, <http://news.sohu.com/20070306/n248539036.shtml>.

²⁵ The figures listed reflected the budget for expenditure approved by National People's Congress. The income mostly comes from the allocation by the Central Government and partly comes from revenues of business activities of affiliated organizations under MFA. All figures are based on the website of MFA. See "Major Data of Departmental Budget of MFA in 2014," April 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/wjb_602314/zfxgk_603900/xxgkml_603904/ysxxl_603906/t1148346.shtml; "Major Data of Departmental Budget of MFA in 2013," http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/wjb_602314/zfxgk_603900/xxgkml_603904/ysxxl_603906/t1032487.shtml; and "Major Data of Departmental Budget of MFA in 2012," http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/wjb_602314/zfxgk_603900/xxgkml_603904/ysxxl_603906/t1059850.shtml.

²⁶ These figures also reflect the actual expenditures of MOFCOM while the income mostly comes from the allocation by the Central Government and partly comes from revenues of business activities of affiliated organizations under MOFCOM. See "Departmental Budget of MOC," website of MOFCOM, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/cwgongzuo/feiyqr/201404/20140400552592.shtml>, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/cwgongzuo/feiyqr/201304/20130400094676.shtml>, and <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/cwgongzuo/feiyqr/201204/20120408084863.shtml>.

²⁷ See "China's Defense Budget and Stability Maintenance Budget Rising, But Public Security Higher Than Defense Budget," *RFI Chinese*, June 3, 2013; Chen Zhifen, "China's Defense Budget and Expenditure of 'Stability Maintenance'", *BBC Chinese*, March 5, 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2014/03/140305_ana_china_npc_army; Xiong Chuandong,

“How Deep the Bottomless Pit of the Pricey ‘Stability Maintenance’?” *Guangming Daily*, June 09/2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/observation/2010-06/09/c_13341139.htm.

²⁸ General Administration of Sport (GAS), subordinate to the State Council, is a government agency responsible for sports management in China. It administers both the All-China Sports Federation and Chinese Olympic Committee. GAS’s budget for overseas travels totaled 239 million yuan in 2015, higher than Academy of Sciences (94.11 million yuan) and MFA (86.93 million yuan). See Huang Ying and Zhang Yuan, “General Administration of Sport Increased Its “Three Public” Budget by 30 Million Yuan Because of Games,” *xin jing bao*, April 21, 2015, <http://sports.sina.com.cn/o/2015-04-21/17337582834.shtml>.

²⁹ Every input of information and contact with any other agency has to be “logged” or documented, mandated by operational procedure of the MFA. Almost official consultations and communications within the MFA and those in interagency communications have to be documented.

³⁰ Interview with several diplomats, 2012-2014.

³¹ Regulation on Party and Government Agencies Document Processing Work (*dangzheng jiguan gongwenchuli gongzuo tiaoli*).

³² Regulation on Party and Government Agency Document Processing Work, http://www.qstheory.cn/zywz/201303/t20130328_219527.htm.

³³ Wang Boyong, New China’s Foreign Policy Decision-making Mechanism and Its Evolution, June 2000, http://www.wangboyong.com/boyong_publicationscn.htm.

³⁴ Interviews with diplomats at Chinese Embassy in Washington DC, 2010-2011; interviews with multiple officials at MFA specialized in Asian affairs and American affairs, Beijing, 2012-14.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Interview with a senior Chinese diplomat, Washington DC, November of 2011.

³⁷ This incident was cited by an interviewee of MFA in 2012 as an example how different departments and divisions of MFA would be drawn in together to handle incidents.

³⁸ This conclusion is made based on interviews with over 11 diplomats who specialize in different departments and divisions at MFA from the period of 2008 to 2013. However, there is exception to the rule. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister since 2013, was pointed out as such an exception. Wang Yi was promoted in the first place from a clerk because of innovative thinking and proposition he made. This seemed to create a career pattern for his later diplomatic career.

³⁹ Interview with a visiting diplomat, Washington DC, February 2014.

⁴⁰ This conclusion is drawn from substantial interviews the author had with various officials from other ministries, analysts and academic researchers, and various PLA officers.

⁴¹ Interview with Luo Tianguang, Chief of Department of Consular Affairs of MFA, from “Protection of China’s overseas interests: MFA newly established Department of Security Affairs”, *Chinese Newsweek*, July 5, 2004, Issue 186, <http://www.chinanews.com/news/2004year/2004-07-05/26/455854.shtml>.

⁴² “Introduction of the functions of Foreign Policy Advisory Group (FPAG)”, website of FPAG, <http://fpag.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/>.

⁴³ Website of FPAG, <http://fpag.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zwhjj/>.

⁴⁴ Interview with a senior official who previously headed the Department of Policy Planning of MFA, Jilin, Fall of 2012.

⁴⁵ Other agencies listed under the Party system or CCP Central Committee, all listed under the name “Central” (*zhongyang*), include for example the United Front Work Department, the Propaganda Department and the Organization Department. A few agencies such as Taiwan Affairs Office and Foreign Propaganda Office/State Council News Office are listed both under the Party system and the State Council system.

⁴⁶ “ID Minister Wang Jiarui Discussed about CCP’s Diplomacy In the Past Decade,” *Xinhua News Agency*, October 9, 2012, <http://cnzgw.org/2012/1009/12712.html>.

⁴⁷ Before 1954, China established diplomatic relations with only nine non-Communist countries.

⁴⁸ Wang Jiaxiang, the first chief of ID (1951-1966) famous for his role in crystalizing the so-called “Mao Zedong thought” in 1943, was disgraced and sidelined in 1962 for criticizing the People’s Commune and advocating an alternative but “revisionist” foreign policy line – “three reconciliations and one reduction”, in plain language reconciling with the imperialists, the reactionaries, and the revisionists, and reducing

assistance to the struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Qiao Shi, one of the ID ministers, advocated for the supremacy of rule of law while Jiang Zemin, Qiao's political rival, advocated the supremacy of rule of the Party. These two examples demonstrated the consistently mID policy positions of the ID despite its relative insularity from the outside world. Past ministers of the ID who worked as underground student movement in Shanghai before 1949 included Qiao Shi, Qian Liren, Zhu Liang and Li Shuzheng.

⁴⁹ Hu Jintao has several close associates who crossed paths with Hu with their origin from Guizhou Province. Hu was once the youngest provincial Party Secretary when serving in Guizhou from 1985-88, taking the place of Zhu Houze, a key supporter of Hu Yaobang, who was promoted to Propaganda Minister. Dai Bingguo, son-in-law of Huang Zhen, one of the "General Ambassadors", grew up in Guizhou Province.

⁵⁰ Li Zhaoxing allegedly had close relationship with Qian Qichen. Yang Jiechi was named as Foreign Minister, allegedly on recommendation by Jiang Zemin. Interviews with scholars close to MFA. Yang had personal interactions with Xi when Xi, from 1979-1982, was working for Geng Biao, who served as various ambassadors in MFA for more than a decade and then Defense Minister in early 1980s. Yang was a translator for top leaders from 1975 to 1983. Xi knew Yang then but the two were not close with each other when Xi took power in 2012. After Xi took power, he chose Russia as the first foreign destination and skipped Cuba in his first visit to Latin American, contravening MFA's and most likely Yang's recommendation. Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, 2013. Yang's advancement from Foreign Minister to State Councilor, which follows the practice of his predecessors (except Li Zhaoxing who was punished by Hu and not allowed to advance to the position of State Councilor after retiring from Foreign Minister), was viewed by some analysts as part of Xi's plan of shifting power out by establishing new structures. The power of decision-making of Leading Small Groups are hollowed out and transferred to NSC, a new organization, in which Yang has not granted any permanent position by May 2015 according to public knowledge. Moreover, it is telling that not Yang Jiechi, the officially top diplomat, but Li Zhanshu, Director of General Office and Executive Director of NSC, went to meet Russian President Putin on Xi's behalf in March 2015 to pave the road for Xi's upcoming visit to Moscow in May. Therefore, Yang's advancement to be State Councilor did not necessarily mean that he increased political power.

⁵¹ Interview with Chinese analyst familiar with the China-DPRK negotiations in 2003, Beijing, 2010.

⁵² DPRK has distrusted MFA for a variety of reasons, some reasonable and some out of bias and parochial interests. First, most Korean-speaking diplomats in MFA are trained in South Korea and therefore they carry an accent DPRK dislikes. Second, MFA handles China's diplomatic relations with Republic of Korea (ROK), which has made DPRK suspicious of MFA diplomats' contemptuous attitude towards them. Previous espionage cases reinforced such a suspicion of DPRK. Particularly notable cases include Li Bin, Chinese Ambassador to ROK (2001-2005), who was trained in DPRK and had a close relationship with Kim Jong-il, was arrested for spying for ROK but was convicted and sentenced for seven years on corruption crimes. This is a probably biased and false impression of DPRK as Zhang Liucheng, Chief of the 2nd Bureau (dedicated to dealing with affairs on DPRK and ROK) of ID, was convicted of spying for Seoul as well and was subsequently sentenced to death after secret trials. Third, DPRK understood the competitive nature between MFA and ID and therefore plays ID off MFA intentionally. The above conclusions are based on multiple interviews the author had with MFA officials on Korean affairs, analysts of ID and academic researchers on Korean studies.

⁵³ Interview with a senior diplomat, Beijing, 2013.

⁵⁴ "What Signals Hu Jintao's Speech Made?" *People's Daily Overseas Edition*, July 5, 2011.

⁵⁵ Zhang Zhijun was another senior official of the ID, who moved onto the position of Executive Vice Foreign Minister and then the Party Secretary of MFA after Dai. After occupying these positions at various points between 2009 and 2013, Zhang was considered a leading candidate to succeed Yang Jiechi as Foreign Minister. However, Zhang lost the race to Wang Yi, then head of the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) and a highly-capable and well-respected diplomat. Zhang instead replaced Wang as the head of TAO in 2013. Wang Jiarui, short-listed for the job of State Councilor on foreign affairs in 2012, did not win out in the race either, as Xi Jinping stepped in to become the new leader.

⁵⁶ Interview with a diplomat with rich experiences of dealing with North Korea, Beijing, 2012. As an example of this conclusion, in 2008, Kim Jong-il secretly contacted the Chinese military attaché for sending China's best doctors, who normally work for the PLA, to examine him after his stroke. The PLA agreed. Liu Xiaoming, Chinese Ambassador to North Korea, was kept in the dark until the trip by the

Chinese military doctors was completed. It is a regular practice that channels of communications in the embassy, one of the MFA and the other of the PLA, go completely separate ways without any interaction and cross. However, MFA was still infuriated about this incident. Kim's purpose was clear: North Korea fundamentally distrusted the MFA. This is based on the author's interview with an analyst familiar with China's interactions with North Korea, Beijing, 2013.

⁵⁷ CFAO's main functions include: coordinating between the CCP Central Committee-affiliated (CCPCC) agencies (Party agencies) and ministries and departments under the State Council (government agencies); conducting research on major issues of foreign policy and international affairs, while providing advice and recommendations on decision-making to the CCPCC; overseeing and ensuring that decisions and policies set by the FALSG are implemented, especially when such policies involve multiple agencies and cut across the system; developing and reviewing regulations on liaising with foreign entities (waishi gongzuo); and handling important requests, applications and briefings submitted by the CCPCC, government agencies, and local governments on important issues related to foreign liaisons, including approval of high-level Party, government and local officials' foreign visits. See Zhang Ji, "Basic Procedure of China's Foreign policy-making", *Oriental Morning Post*, March 18, 2013.

⁵⁸ Interview with a retired official of Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC), later Ministry of Commerce (MOC), who knew Liu well, 2014. Liu remained the rank of Vice Foreign Minister until his retirement. In comparison, all those who subsequently took the position of Director of CFAO elevated to the level of State Councilor.

⁵⁹ Dai Bingguo, then the Deputy Foreign Minister, succeeded Liu as Director of CFAO in 2005. Dai retained his position as Director of CFAO after he became the State Councilor on foreign affairs in 2008 and superseded the Foreign Minister.

⁶⁰ Interview with a senior policy analyst at CFIUS, Beijing, 2013.

⁶¹ This starts to change slightly under Xi Jinping. On the regulation GO issued on prevention of "leaders and officials" to use their influence to unduly intervene in the judiciary system, GO unprecedentedly included the PLA under the 11 defined categories of "leaders and officials". See "GO: Military Leaders Intervening in Judiciary Cases Would Be Put Under Supervision," *jinghua shibao*, March 31, 2015. That said, CFAO, with much less authority than GO, has even less power to assert itself in military realm.

⁶² See reference 58.

⁶³ Both Wu and Qian had long-term experiences of working as part of underground resistance force in Shanghai in the revolutionary years. Wu also had experience of working for ID under the Party system. These experiences were valuable credentials for Wu which ensured his place in the Party and Politburo. Qian had some but relatively less revolutionary credentials compared to Wu. But Qian played a crucial role in breaking out the Western embargo after the 1989 Tian'anmen crackdown. Therefore, Qian was awarded a seat at Politburo. However, Qian's political career was hard to be emulated by others. Qian's successors including Dai Bingguo were technocrats in foreign affairs. However, their singular experiences couldn't cultivate their political credentials to a level that they were hopeful for getting a seat at Politburo.

⁶⁴ TAO is tasked with investigating, researching, drafting, and checking the implementation of guidelines and policies regarding China's relationship with Taiwan, as well as organizing and coordinating work related to Taiwan affairs under the State Council and local governments.

⁶⁵ The execution of the work of Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group, established in 1956, was headed by Li Kenong, Deputy Chief of General Staff and the PLA intelligence "tzar", and Luo Ruiqing, then Minister of Public Security, assisted by Luo Qingchang and Ling Yun, both with long-term anti-espionage and intelligence expertise. Ling Yun became Minister of State Security in 1983-85. The TALSG established in 1956 was a highly classified organization housed in Zhongnanhai under the direct leadership of Zhou Enlai. Its then mission was dedicated to turning high-ranking officials and officers working for ROC in Taiwan. It wasn't till 1967 that this office was moved to the compound of State Council. However, it was soon crashed by the rebels and ceased to function till 1978 when Wang Dongxing took over. See Tong Xiaopeng, *feng yu si shi nian*, Volume II (Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), p. 274; Li Li, *Witnessing Wind and Cloud Across the Taiwan Strait*, 2nd Edition, (Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 2005), p. 288.

⁶⁶ Ding was one of Deng Xiaoping's bridge partners. He was demoted from Minister of Railways following a serious railway incident before becoming Director of TAO of State Council, signifying the relatively weak power of this position.

⁶⁷ Yang Kaihuang, "Explanation and Evaluation of CCP's Taiwan Policy: Studies of Decision-makers' Propositions," *Dong Wu Zheng Zhi Xue Bao* (Chronicle of Dongwu University) 7 (1997).

⁶⁸ Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group was resumed in 1978 (announced in 1979) after nearly 11 years of suspension. In November 1980, local branches of TALSG were established in all provinces except Tibet. Liu Zhiqing, "Ice-breaking in 1987: how family visits were allowed across Taiwan Straits", *Jinghua Shibao*, September 27, 2009, http://epaper.jinghua.cn/html/2009-09/27/content_467032.htm.

⁶⁹ Interview with a former official who worked at Taiwan Affairs Office, Beijing, summer of 2012.

⁷⁰ Chen Yunlin, Director of TAO, was Vice Governor of Heilongjiang Province. Li Bingcai, Deputy Director of TAO, was mayor of Yanzhou of Jiangsu Province. Zheng Lizhong, Deputy Director of TAO, was Party Secretary of Xiamen of Fujian Province.

⁷¹ The Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), which is dedicated to handling business and technical exchanges and receives the leadership of TAO, was founded inside the compound of the PLA GSD in 1991. Interview with an active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

⁷² The adaptability of TAO could be exemplified by a unit which specially studies Taiwanese plastic surgeons as surveys in Taiwan indicated plastic surgeons in Taiwan, for some reasons, tend to oppose engagements with Mainland.

⁷³ Interview with a professor in Taiwan studies who work with Beijing United University, Beijing, summer of 2013. For example, a group of analysts led by Xing Kuishan, then Director of TAO's Research Bureau, initially formulated this document based on the thinking of Wang Daohan, a long-term Chairman of Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). Then, "Jiang's eight points" was formulated based on the advice and feedback of Taiwanese scholars and visitors. See Yang Kaihuang, "CCP's Taiwan Policy".

⁷⁴ Compared to its predecessor, Political Council established in 1949, the State Council has the power over defense, at least on paper.

⁷⁵ Article 89 of China's Constitution.

⁷⁶ The two exceptions, Qiao Guanhua (1974-76) and Li Zhaoxing (2003-2007), failed to elevate to state councilors or vice premier after their tenures as Foreign Minister. Qiao failed because of his close association with Gang of Four. Li failed because of his distant relationship with Hu Jintao.

⁷⁷ See reference 63.

⁷⁸ In 1982, the State Council launched an institutional reform and added the position of state councilor.

⁷⁹ Wu was disgraced politically in 1989. Wu Xiaoyong, Wu Xueqian's son, a journalist at China Radio International, was arrested in 1989 for announcing the news about the military crackdown of the student movement without authorization. Wu Xiaoyong was put in labor camp for four years (1989-93). This incident overshadowed Wu Xueqian's political career. As a result, Qian Qichen, instead of Wu Xueqian, stood at the forefront of China's diplomatic efforts of breaking down the US-led sanctions after 1989. Wu Xueqian instead was limited to play a role in cross-strait relations as Deputy Director of Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group. Wu actively advocated to develop economic ties across the Strait to dissolve the pressure of the Taiwan independence force. See "Wu Xueqian, Former Vice Premier, Dies at 87," *Lianhe Bao*, April 08, 2008; Zheng Hanliang, "Son of Wu Xueqian Said No Regrets in Reporting Truth about June 4th," *Radio Free Asia*, May 13, 2014.

⁸⁰ Qian Qichen was promoted to be state councilor on foreign affairs in 1991 despite Wu's portfolio as Vice Prime Minister on foreign affairs.

⁸¹ Tang Jiaxuan, after his tenure as FM, became the State Councilor in charge of foreign affairs but Tang only occupied the membership of the CCP Central Committee, as Li Zhaoxing, the new Foreign Minister and Tang's successor, and Dai Bingguo, then the Party Secretary and shadow Foreign Minister of MFA. In 2008, Li Zhaoxing failed to elevate to the position of State Councilor while Dai Bingguo, a close associate of Hu Jintao, moved up from the head of International Department (ID) to be the State Councilor on foreign affairs. Yang Jiechi continued on to become the State Councilor on foreign affairs after serving as Foreign Minister in 2008-12, beating Wang Jiarui, head of ID, who was shortlisted as a candidate.

⁸² A few research entities were housed in the State Council system such as Institute for World Development under Center for Development Studies under State Council, which was dedicated to provide policy advice on world economy and foreign policy. State Council also set up regularly salaried Advisor positions

(*canshi*) for outside experts to advise it on foreign affairs such as Shi Yinhong, a professor with Renmin University of China. Personal conversation with Prof. Shi Yinhong, Beijing, January 2013.

⁸³ The work is jointly led by the National Development and Reform Commission, the Headquarter of the PLA GSD, the PLA GPD and the PLA GLD. The office is set in the PLA GSD Mobilization Department.

⁸⁴ The work is led by the Headquarter of the PLA GSD. The office is set in the PLA GSD Operation Department.

⁸⁵ The work is lead by the Headquarter of the PLA GSD. The office is set in the PLA GSD Operation Department.

⁸⁶ The work is jointly led by Ministry of Civil Affairs and the PLA GPD. The office is set in the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

⁸⁷ Defense Minister, who does not hold the position of CMC Vice Chairman concurrently, has only military diplomacy and mobilization in his official portfolio. Defense Minister holds the position of director of the Commission of Border and Coastal Defense (CBCD) but most work is carried out by the Division of Operations under GSD under the supervision of the first-ranking Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of operations, who concurrently holds the position of Deputy Director of CBCD and answers to Chief of General Staff and CMC Vice Chairman in charge of operations and army-building.

⁸⁸ There are many cases of Minister-level officials placed on posts of Deputy Minister-level positions, the reason for the range rather than an exact number of current Minister-level officials. See Qian Haoping, "How Many Bureaucracies at the Level of 'Ministries'?", February 19, 2012, *Southern Weekend*, <http://www.infzm.com/content/70110>.

⁸⁹ This point was repeated both by officials from the Foreign Ministry and the PLA.

⁹⁰ Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, pp.19-24.

⁹¹ Interview with a diplomat at MFA who was familiar with the Copenhagen Summit, Beijing, 2011.

⁹² Shi Hongtao, "China Would Establish Five Mechanism to Ensure Citizens' Safety Overseas," *People's Daily*, December 28, 2005, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/3979842.html>.

⁹³ "Situation of Exchanges of Visits of Chinese and Foreign Citizens in 2014," MFA website, <http://cs.mfa.gov.cn/gyls/lsgz/ztzl/ss2014/t1245062.shtml>.

⁹⁴ Interview with a senior police officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁹⁵ The official government report in 2004 indicated that China's police force totaled 862,752 in 1994. See An article in 2004 indicated that China's police force totaled 1.7 million. Although the article didn't specify, this figure was still an underestimation after excluding auxiliary forces such as the People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) and the Chengguan (city management para-police law enforcers or urban patrol officers). "MPS Cleaned Out Unfit Law-enforcement Personnel: 30,000 Policemen Kicked Out," *lianwang Dongfang*, January 8, 2004, <http://www.china-embassy.org/chn/zt/zgrq/t58003.htm>. It is widely believed among scholars in China that MPS oversees about two million police force, excluding PAPF and the Chengguan force.

⁹⁶ Jonathan Kaiman, "Chinese passport map causes diplomatic dispute", *The Guardian*, November 27, 2012.

⁹⁷ Interview with an international security expert affiliated with MFA, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁹⁸ David Sacks indicated this point in an exchange with the author. It was confirmed by the author's following interviews with PRC officials carrying the diplomatic passports.

⁹⁹ Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decision-making in China*, pp. 164-65.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Interview with a former PLA Colonel and a seasoned expert on the US-China relations, Beijing, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Such a view point was expressed by Jeff Bader in a personal conversation, Washington DC, October 2013.

¹⁰⁵ This is according to Nigel Inkster, a researcher of International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and a former British Secret intelligence Service (SIS) officer, who generously shared his unpublished paper with the author. Nigel Inkster, "The Cyber Capabilities of the Chinese Intelligence Agencies: The Transnational Implications", an unpublished paper manuscript.

¹⁰⁶ Lampton identified “gradual decentralization of power (occasionally in policy formulation and more often in implementation)” as one of the four trends in China’s policy and behavior. See Lampton, “China’s Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process,” pp. 19-31.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with a senior profession at Central Party School, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Li Zhaoxing’s father-in-law is Qin Lizhen, a well-respected diplomat and Liu Shaoqi’s secretary.

¹⁰⁹ This conclusion was made based on various comments Li Zhaoxing made openly after retirement in which he cautioned against any proposition of China’s rise or G2. See “Li Zhaoxing: don’t bring up ‘China’s rise’ as it invites abuses”, *Guangzhou Daily*, December 31, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Interview with two highly-regarded Chinese ambassadors who had major postings in Western Europe and the UN, Washington DC, 2010 and several retired senior Chinese diplomats in 2011.

¹¹¹ Interview with officials in MFA, Beijing, 2012-13.

¹¹² Interview with Jeffrey Bader, Washington DC, 2013.

¹¹³ There was numerous evidence on this. Just to cite a few examples. Yang Jiechi accompanied Hu in all the following visits but was not mentioned in most of Chinese news reports. See “Hu Jintao Meets Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda,” *Xinhua News Agency*, March 7, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-05/07/content_8122211.htm. More obscure news media confirmed that Yang Jiechi was accompanying Hu during his visit. See “Hu Jintao Visits Japan,” *Xinhua yuebao*, issue 6 of 2008, <http://www.wenxue100.com/baokan/57922.thtml>.

¹¹⁴ By January 2013, insiders of China’s foreign affairs system said three candidates were shortlisted for the position of Foreign Minister, Zhang Zhijun, Zhang Yesui, and Wang Yi. Wang Yi is the most capable and experienced diplomat among the three, but he ranked the lowest among the three in terms of political ranking and credential in the Party. The position of Foreign Minister in China is for most of the time has not been determined by capability, strategic vision and expertise of the candidate, but by competitiveness of ranking, credential and political support in the Party. Wang Yi was also a highly contested choice because of oppositions from opposite factions within MFA. For the position of state councilor on foreign relations, Wang Jiarui, head of ID, Wang Hujing, Politburo member and political strategists serving both Jiang and Hu, and Yang Jiechi were all shortlisted for the race. In 2013, Wang Yi won the race and became the new Foreign Minister while Yang Jiechi, against various oppositions, became state councilor on foreign affairs.

¹¹⁵ One insider commented that Yang, as the new State Councilor on foreign affairs, is “one piece of skin, hung up high.” Interview with a Chinese analyst affiliated with MFA, Beijing, 2013. Lampton believed that Xi is moving power from the State to the Party, which explains the reason for Yang’s decline of political power. See David M. Lampton, “Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission: Policy Coordination and Political Power” (pre-publication draft), *Journal of Contemporary China*--the hard copy version is tentatively scheduled for: Vol. 24, No. 95 (September 2015).

¹¹⁶ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959), pp. 296. Elsewhere, Vagts quotes a British general as saying, “Politicians make us soldiers sick, soldiers being perchance too straight and honest for them.” pp. 318. Also, an 1869 description of the Armed Forces of the Crown described soldiers as “A class of men set apart from the general mass of the community, trained to particular uses, formed to peculiar notions, governed by peculiar laws, marked by peculiar distinctions.” (Quoted in Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 328.

¹¹⁷ Interview with an active-duty officer, Beijing, 2010.

¹¹⁸ Interview with an active-duty senior PLA officer, 2013.

¹¹⁹ Sam Jameson, “Japanese Minister Resigns After Furor Over Remarks,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 08, 1994, http://articles.latimes.com/1994-05-08/news/mn-55196_1_world-war-ii.

¹²⁰ The interview with the PLA officer was conducted in 1996 when the author was working for *China Daily* as a reporter.

¹²¹ As a reporter for *China Daily* between 1994 and 2000, I had received multiple pieces of advice/warning from the PLA officers, at ranks of major generals and lieutenant generals, to quietly urge me and my colleagues in the press to tone down the criticism against Japan. In my interview with Cui Liru, President of CICIR, in 2013, Cui agreed with me on the conclusion that the PLA senior officers generally held a much more moderate policy positions towards Japan compared to civilian analysts and MFA officials.

¹²² A PLA officer in 1996 expressed sentiment that was even more moderate: “In the majority of frictions and disputes (China) had with the U.S. and Japan, it is not necessary for China to deal heavy blows to either

the U.S. or Japan. One of the reasons is that as the three countries have very complicated interests and relationships in different areas, they also share enormous amount of common interests,” PLA Senior Colonel Tang Yongsheng wrote in Strategy and Management magazine. See Tang Yongsheng, “Triangle relations among China, the US and Japan and choice of China's posture”, Strategy and Management, Issue I of 1997, <http://www.cssm.org.cn/download/zzwz/zz19970104.pdf>

¹²³ Chinese diplomats take a particularly tough position towards Japan in their public speeches. See Cheng Yonghua ed., *The History Shall Never Be Forgotten – Chinese Diplomats Refuting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Homage at the Yasukuni War Shrine* (English Edition) (Beijing: wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe (China Intercontinental Press), 2014).

¹²⁴ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2010.

¹²⁵ Interview with a senior analyst associated with the PLA, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹²⁶ Violent civil unrests and riots took place in 2008, with notable incidents in Weng'an, Longnan, Menglian as well as almost nationwide strikes by cab drivers started from Chongqing. See Han Yonghong, “Overlook of China's Societal Situation in 2009,” *lianhe zaobao*, January 1, 2009; Yali Chen, “Protests and Policing: Challenges for the Beijing Olympics”, *China Security Quarterly*, vol. 4 no.2 Summer 2008.

¹²⁷ David Eimer, “As China Reels From 184 Deaths in Urumqi Riots, A Beaten Woman Fears For Her Husband, *The Telegraph*,” July 11, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/5805352/As-China-reels-from-184-deaths-in-Urumqi-riots-a-beaten-woman-fears-for-her-husband.html>.

¹²⁸ At the meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum in Hanoi in July 2010, 12 of the heads of the 27 delegations present mentioned South China Sea, an area China has territorial dispute with multiple ASEAN countries. See Donald Emmerson, “China's ‘frown diplomacy’ in Southeast Asia,” *Asia Times*, October 5, 2010, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/LJ05Ad02.html>.

¹²⁹ China's frustrations and fears were openly witnessed by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's angry response in ASEAN Regional Forum in July 2010, in which he bluntly stated that “China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact.” See John Pomfret, “U.S. Takes a Tougher Tone With China,” *The Washington Post*, July 30, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/29/AR2010072906416.html>.

¹³⁰ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹³¹ Interview with a PLA senior colonel, Beijing, 2012.

¹³² Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Interviews with multiple PLA officers from PLAAF, PLAN and Army, 2010-2014.

¹³⁵ The official social average salary of Beijing-based employees was 48444 yuan a year or 4037 yuan a month in 2009. See Long Lu, “Beijing-based employees' salaries averaged 48444 yuan in 2009”, *Beijing Evening News*, July 19, 2010, <http://ldjy.beijing.cn/ldbh/ldgz/n214098488.shtml>.

¹³⁶ In comparison, the social average salary of Beijing residents in 2011 is 4672 yuan per month and 56061 yuan a year. See “Beijing employees' monthly salary averages 4672 yuan, up by 11.2%”, *Beijing Evening News*, April 7, 2012, <http://finance.chinanews.com/cj/2012/04-07/3802283.shtml>.

¹³⁷ Interview with Dai Xu, Beijing, Summer of 2011.

¹³⁸ Interview with several PLA officers, Beijing, 2012.

¹³⁹ Interview with an active-duty PLA officer, summer of 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a PLA officer, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Interviews with retired and active-duty PLA officers, 2011-2014.

¹⁴² This conclusion is based on multiple interviews the author conducted with PLA officers. Very few PLA officers, mostly younger and junior officers and retired officers, concede that budget is one of the considerations for the PLA's policy stand. However, the majority of non-military IR experts hold the view that budget is one of the factors that impact the PLA's positions in certain policy issues.

¹⁴³ This item of discretionary budget could amount to 800 billion yuan a year on average, while the PLA's weapon procurement cuts out of a piece of it. Interview with a senior PLA officer, 2012.

¹⁴⁴ This PLA officer didn't specify what is counted as the narrowest waist of North Korea, but he possibly referred to the line from Wansan to Nampo.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁴⁶ The PLA's relatively restrained behavior in the ECS and SCS did not preclude the provocative actions of the paramilitary force, whose motives and actions will be analyzed in later chapters. Interview with several PLA officers, 2013-2014.

Chapter Six: The PLA and the Civilian Foreign Affairs System: Mechanisms of Coordination

This and the previous chapter explain the dynamics of interactions between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system. While the previous chapter focused on bureaucratic culture and relative bureaucratic power, this chapter looks at the mechanisms for and rules that govern interaction. More specifically, this chapter first discusses the mechanism or platform through which the PLA interacts with the MFA and other civilian foreign affairs bureaucracies, and then explores what factors of the foreign and security policy-making process strengthen or weaken the PLA's bargaining position.

Since 2013, the dominance of Leading Small Groups as the mechanism the Party utilized for policy deliberation, consensus-building, and coordination among various stakeholders has been seriously challenged with the establishment of new institutions under Xi Jinping. In 2013, the National Security Commission (NSC) was introduced, as part of Xi Jinping's attempt to hollow out existing policy mechanisms (i.e., leading small groups) and reroute power into a new organization that he could lead. While leading small groups and their executive offices are still standing, as of early 2015,¹ the NSC, with an unprecedentedly broad mandate, has become the new nexus in foreign and security policy-making. Leading Small Groups' primary purpose is to deliberate, build consensus, and coordinate various stakeholders within the government, the military, and the Party. These "cross-system integrators," as David M. Lampton has termed them, serve not only as a connecting point for various agencies within the government system,

but also as the bridge to solve disagreements among the government bureaucracies and the military. Although some Leading Small Groups have existed for a long time and play a crucial role in policy-making, they are in essence a provisional structure, not an “embedded” part of the Party.

Genesis of Leading Small Groups

The mechanism of leading small groups (LSG) came out of Mao’s distrust of Zhou Enlai.² In 1953, Mao was already greatly displeased with Zhou because Zhou did not consult him on the revision of the taxation system and instructed the Party Center, i.e., the Central Committee of the CCP (CCPCC) to strengthen its leadership over government agencies. Zhou drafted the resolution, which required that all major issues have to be reported to the CCPCC first, and all Party Committees in the central government are directly answerable to the CCPCC. In February 1958, Mao proposed the principle of “big power monopolized in one individual, small power decentralized, Party Committees make decisions, and various parties (in government) implement decisions.”³ In order for leading bureaucrats to better serve the Party, the government’s work was divided into “*kou*,” or areas of planning, finance and economy, politics and law, foreign affairs, communication, agriculture and forestry, labor, culture, and education. Officials were then put in charge of these larger areas or “*kou*.”⁴ This was the genesis of leading small groups.⁵

Five LSGs – finance and economy, politics and law, foreign affairs, science, and culture and education – were subsequently established in June 1958. These LSGs were put directly under the leadership of the Politburo and the Secretariat. The LSGs were

initially able to formulate their own policy proposals and held immense power over coordinating and supervising agreed upon policies, arranging personnel appointments, and even influencing the policy-making process.⁶ However, during this period, the LSGs' mandate focused more on coordination than policy-making.⁷ Judiciary and government agencies, which by constitutional design originally reported to the National People's Congress, started to report to the LSGs in their "*kou*" or area, making the Party Center the actual supreme power. LSGs functioned until the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, which paralyzed the majority of Party and government agencies, including the LSGs.

A turning point for LSGs occurred in 1980, when Deng Xiaoping launched political system reforms, which centered on separating the Party from the State, strengthening government institutions, and withdrawing the Party from governance. In a speech on reforming the Party and the state's leading institutions in an extended meeting of the Politburo, Deng proposed to solve the problems of "no differentiation between the Party and the government" and "replacing the government with the Party leadership."⁸ With Deng's proposal, LSGs' status and importance ascended. Since 1987, LSGs have been directly under the Politburo and PBSC. LSGs enjoy the same status as the Secretariat, and have more power in the policy-making process.⁹ Arguably, LSGs' ascension was relative, because the Secretariat's power and status has sharply declined since the late 1980s.¹⁰ Nonetheless, following this change LSGs have more room to maneuver.

Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG)

The Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) is one of several channels for the civilian foreign affairs system to coordinate with the PLA. In June 1958, China institutionalized the foreign affairs management system¹¹ and established the FALSG, an organ listed under the Party that directly reports to the Secretariat. This hierarchy established that government agencies had an advisory role, but the Party Center, Politburo and PBSC had the final say.¹² The first FALSG was composed of six people and headed by Marshal Chen Yi, the then Foreign Minister. Its other members were Wang Jiaxiang (Secretary General of the Secretariat), Zhang Wentian, Liu Ningyi, Liao Chengzhi, and Ye Jizhuang, all of whom were Central Committee members.¹³

The FALSG became dysfunctional during the Cultural Revolution, along with the paralysis of the rest of the Party and government system. It wasn't resumed until 1981. The FALSG is not a permanently established institution,¹⁴ but rather is an ad-hoc mechanism to debate, discuss, and coordinate foreign affairs-related issues.¹⁵ Its functions were defined as decision-making consultation and coordination: first, it "discusses guidelines and major policies in foreign affairs but leaves details to various agencies"; second, it coordinates among relevant agencies.¹⁶ More specifically, it is charged with hosting inter-system, inter-agency meetings composed of representatives of all member agencies¹⁷ and working meetings¹⁸; enforcing decisions reached in such meetings; conducting investigations and research; and providing advice on major foreign policy issues and international affairs. FALSG, therefore, functions as a study, consultation, deliberation, coordination, advisory, and implementation body that serves the Politburo and the PBSC.

From 1981-87, Li Xiannian headed the FALSG, who was assisted by former Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei, the Director of CFAO (then under the State Council, not the Party). Under Li, the FALSG convened weekly.¹⁹ Li, with a conservative worldview, was a weak leader in foreign affairs, who was overshadowed by Deng. Therefore, the FALSG provided advice on strategic guidelines such as opposing the hegemony of both the Soviet Union and the U.S. However, the FALSG did not have significant influence on foreign and security policy-making until Li Peng, then Premier, took the FALSG's helm in 1988.²⁰ Vice Premier Wu Xueqian, a seasoned bureaucrat and an expert in foreign affairs, assisted Li in his capacity as the deputy head of FALSG.²¹ Since 1988, bureaucratic representation has dictated the FALSG's composition.²² FALSG started to reach the peak of its power after Jiang Zemin became the FALSG's head in 1996-97, triggered by the diplomatic crises caused by Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S.²³ Various agencies' representation on the FALSG has changed over time, reflecting both the complicated and varying needs of the time and the pluralization of stakeholders in foreign affairs. The PLA's representation in FALSG started in early 1980s and regularized in 1990s.²⁴

Officially, member agencies in the FALSG carry the real power in decision-making, while the executive office (Central Foreign Affairs Office), plays the role of "secretary," tasked with organizing meetings, taking notes, and supervising the implementation of the decisions made at FALSG meetings. Since Dai Bingguo, a trusted advisor by Hu Jintao, became CFAO's Director in 2005 (explained in this chapter at page 10), CFAO has weighed in more in the FALSG's decision-making process and engaged in agenda-setting, framing the policy in question, and recommending options.²⁵

Depending on the importance, urgency, and relevance of issues at hand, the FALSG will hold small working meetings with only selected member agencies. Member agencies are called upon to send in their representatives at corresponding ranks, which varies based on how senior and authoritative such officials need to be to present their agency's opinion. For example, if the issue in question is relatively tactical and narrow, representatives who are sent from member agencies could be low-level officials, as long as attending officials all have the same rank. Therefore, in most cases, the heads of member agencies do not attend the meetings. Rather, their representatives attend such meetings, though the lowest ranking representative would not be lower than that of Deputy Chief of a department or division (*fu sizhang jibie*).²⁶

The FALSG holds regular meetings and sometimes invites outside experts to give briefings. When contingencies of strategic importance take place, the FALSG can initiate emergency meetings. Almost all FALSG meetings are held in physical face-to-face settings, instead of over teleconference, for security reasons. FALSG meetings resolve matters mostly through consensus-building, and when in stalemate, the top political leader's opinion is the deciding factor.²⁷ That said, the top political leader regularly places initiatives onto the policy agenda and in these cases, the FALSG works toward the top leader and acts more like a policy implementation organ.

For example, when China and the Soviet Union started to normalize their diplomatic relationship in 1988, Deng initiated the policy of “no embrace, only hands-shaking,” which dictated how senior Chinese officials should greet their Soviet counterparts.²⁸ According to the minutes of Premier Li Peng's secretary, the secretary of Deng Xiaoping's Office called on October 28, 1988, and passed on Deng's message:

“Tell Comrades Qian Qichen and Li Peng and hold a FALSG meeting to discuss the diplomatic protocol of senior officials’ meetings and even summits of China and the Soviet Union. A tone and parameter shall be set for how close we should be, such as whether we should embrace each other (physically)...Embracing (of Chinese and Russians) will shake the world.” On the same day that Deng’s Office placed the phone call, Li instructed: “(Vice Premier Wu) Xueqian (whose portfolio includes foreign affairs) and Comrade (Qian) Qichen, please hold a working meeting (small circle) and deliberate on protocol (with Russians). Together with the decision of the last FALSG, report to Comrade Xiaoping and the Center. I will attend the meeting myself.”²⁹ On November 3, a FALSG meeting was held among Premier Li Peng, Vice Premier Wu Xueqian, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, Zhu Liang (head of the International Department), with non-voting delegates including Vice Foreign Ministers Tian Zengpei and Liu Huaqiu. Article IV of that FALSG meeting stipulated that when (Chinese and Soviet) leaders meet, they shall only shake hands and shall not embrace each other. Thus, the FALSG translated Deng’s stance and instructions into official policy.³⁰

National Security Leading Small Group

In 2000, the National Security Leading Small Group (NSLSG) was established, in response to the shockwaves caused by the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999. In the wake of this incident, both civilian and military analysts such as Zhang Tuosheng, Maj. Gen. Yao Yunzhu, Men Honghua, and many others independently advocated for establishing a National Security Council (NSC). Additionally, a group of PLA analysts recommended to the top leadership that it establish a NSC.³¹ That specific

proposal was not followed, but as a compromise, the NSLSG was established. The NSLSG was originally intended to play a leading role in advising the top leadership and coordinating a response during national security contingencies, with an emphasis on addressing issues that affected the Sino-U.S. relationship.

The NSLSG initially carried a prominent figure such as Zhang Wannian, Vice Chairman of the CMC and Politburo member, who was named as the deputy head of this organization. The other deputy chiefs were Hu Jintao, Jiang's designated successor and then Vice President of China, and Qian Qichen, Vice Premier in charge of foreign affairs and Politburo member. Liu Huaqiu, the Director of Central Foreign Affairs Office, was the Secretary-General of the NSLSG. Other members of the NSLSG included Tang Jiaxuan, then Foreign Minister, Chen Yunlin, Director of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of foreign affairs and intelligence, Xu Yongyue, Minister of State Security, and Jia Chunwang, Minister of Public Security.

Those who initially conceptualized the NSLSG envisioned an organization in which those with strategic vision and the ability to coordinate stakeholders could handle national security crises in a timely fashion. The PLA clearly stood behind this concept, hoping to leverage this body to play a more effective role in issues in which it possessed greater knowledge and expertise. However, that goal was never realized. The NSLSG eventually became redundant and was a mere duplication of the FALSG. The NSLSG did not work for two reasons: first, it lacked an independent and authoritative executive arm, which hindered its ability to enforce its decisions and policies; second, it had only begun to fully operate for one to two years before the next leadership succession took place,

which caused political infighting and turmoil. Jiang insisted on keeping the CMC Chairmanship, while Hu assumed the positions of General Secretary of the Party and President. This exacerbated the conflicts and coordination problems between the military, under Jiang, and government and Party agencies, under Hu. Therefore, coordination mechanisms such as the NSLSG, which emphasized the bigger role of the PLA, were quietly sabotaged due to struggles over personnel, resources, and policy implementation.³²

*Leading Small Group on the Protection of Maritime Interests (Central Maritime Interests Protection Office or CMIPO)*³³

The Leading Small Group on the Protection of Maritime Interests, also called the Central Maritime Interests Protection Office, was established in September/October 2012. Xi Jinping heads the Leading Small Group on the Protection of Maritime Interests, which is a Party organ that specializes in handling contingencies related to maritime disputes. This organization was created in order to strengthen coordination among China's various maritime agencies, and help develop and implement a more coherent maritime policy. Its conceptual prototype was the Office of Maritime Interests Protection in South China Sea under the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), which loosely connected the SOA, MFA, the PLA GSD, PLA Navy, Ministry of Agriculture, General Administration of Customs, and Ministry of Public Security, based on personal initiatives and networks.³⁴ In March 2013, the State Maritime Commission was established under the State Council and is headed by Premier Li Keqiang. It is a government agency that specializes in China's domestic maritime development strategy. The State Maritime Commission's portfolio

includes maritime economy, coastal development, maritime science and technology, and maritime ecological and environmental protection.

Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG)

The Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG) of the CCP was established in July 1954, and was initially composed primarily of officials who specialized in military intelligence and united front work, such as Li Kenong, Luo Ruiqing, Liao Chengzhi, and Xu Bing. While the TALSG was disbanded during the Cultural Revolution, it resumed its work in December 1979 under the leadership of Deng Yingchao, Premier Zhou Enlai's widow. Yang Shangkun, then CMC Secretary General and later CMC Vice Chairman, took over the TALSG from Deng Yingchao most likely in 1988. Jiang Zemin officially took the TALSG's helm in 1993, but in reality he had already begun to control this group in October 1992. Since Jiang, China's top political leader has headed the TALSG. On June 24, 1993, the TALSG was put under the direct leadership of the PBSC.

After Jiang Zemin took over Taiwan policy in 1992-93, the TALSG decreased its seats to six, with Qian Qichen, then Foreign Minister, Wang Daohan, and Wang Zhaoguo playing bigger roles. Gen. Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of military intelligence and military diplomacy, also sat on the TALSG. In 2000, Zhang Wannian, then CMC Vice Chairman, was given a seat on the TALSG, because of the crisis caused by Lee Teng-hui's articulation of a Two-State Theory in 1999 and Taiwan's 2000 presidential election, in which the pro-independence DPP party won the presidency.

National Security Commission under Xi Jinping

This dissertation examines the period of 1978 to 2012 and therefore omits changes initiated by Xi Jinping beginning in 2013. However, due to the fact that in 2013 Xi initiated a drastic reform of foreign policy-making mechanisms, which has possibly made all of the aforementioned Leading Small Groups obsolete, this section examines these recent reforms. Following the November 2013 Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress, the text of a 60-point CCP Central Committee “Decision” adopted at the Plenum was released, which outlined approximately 300 reform measures across the entire policy arena. This indicated “the most significant reform decision by any party leadership since Deng Xiaoping at the watershed 1978 Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee.”³⁵ As part of this reform package, a National Security Commission (NSC) was established, together with two other super groups, the Central Leading Group for the Comprehensive Deepening of Reform³⁶ and the Central Leading Group for Cybersecurity and Informatization.

The NSC, headed by Xi, with Premier Li Keqiang and top legislator Zhang Dejiang serving as his deputies, is an “institutional innovation” that attempts to redistribute the division of power in the Party-State relationship.³⁷ The NSC has a mandate of “decision-making, deliberation and coordination on national security affairs.”³⁸ In other words, the NSC is the “devisor, choice-maker and implementer” of national security plans.³⁹ There was speculation initially that the NSC would be a completely inward-looking entity focused on domestic security. However, there is a growing consensus that this entity covers both internal and external security challenges, and attempts to integrate the civilian foreign affairs system, the PLA, public security, and intelligence agencies.⁴⁰ This formed a stark contrast with previous leading small groups,

as the NSC's primary function is to make decisions, while leading small groups primarily play a coordination and advisory role. Although previous leading small groups occasionally weigh in during the decision-making process, they mostly shape the decision by setting the agenda and providing the options. If leading small groups reach a decision, without the top political leader directly involving himself or providing his opinion, such a decision usually has to be seconded by either Politburo or State Council executive meetings. In other words, leading small groups' role in decision-making is path-restricted. In contrast, decisions could be made directly at the NSC, without having to go through any other channel. The NSC's mandate also clearly includes devising and implementing national security strategy, promoting legislation and rule-making concerning national security, devising national security guidelines, and studying and resolving significant issues in China's national security affairs.

The unprecedented reform of China's foreign and security policy mechanisms that Xi introduced, though still untested by actual emergencies, begs the question: why in the past did China consider the U.S.-type of National Security Council, but never implement it? By answering this question, one can more clearly see the challenges China's new NSC will face.

The idea of establishing a National Security Council, based on the U.S. model, was proposed multiple times throughout the 1990s. It was seriously studied in 1996-97, 1999, 2001, and 2002.⁴¹ Jiang Zemin laid out the proposal for establishing a NSC in 1997.⁴² These efforts partially succeeded with the establishment of a National Security Leading Small Group (NSLSG) in 2000, which was intended to grow into a mechanism akin to the U.S. NSC. However, the NSLSG never evolved in such a way. When Hu

Jintao took power in 2002, he had a team of experts study this idea again and make recommendations. However, this team was not granted a chance to even brief the PBSC on its findings and recommendations, much less put the plan to a vote among PBSC members.⁴³

The idea of forming an NSC was continuously brought up not only because of the pressing need for China to integrate and better coordinate its foreign policy-making actors, but also due to the time pressure of high-stake contingencies that China increasingly encountered beginning in the 1990s. Policy circles of the U.S. and other countries often brought up this idea to their Chinese counterparts because they were concerned by the lack of transparency in China's foreign policy-making system, which caused it to be unpredictable and led to confusion. However, even though most interviewees, from both the military and civilian world, acknowledged that establishing a mechanism like the NSC is a good idea, they all expressed significant reservations and doubts about how to operationalize this idea. Two sets of relationships formed significant obstacles in any attempt to build a NSC: the conflict that would arise between a hypothetical NSC and the PBSC, and how the NSC would tilt the balance of civil-military relations and domestic-foreign security coordination.

The first hurdle is that a foreign and security policy-making mechanism such as the NSC would conflict with the PBSC's authority and role, and would fundamentally rewrite the rules of the PBSC. This returns to a recurring theme – that of the Party's role in decision-making and its relationship with both military and government agencies. Unlike the U.S. system, in which the President makes the final decision on issues of strategic significance, China's system is designed so that the PBSC approves critical

national security decisions by consensus. Having a NSC make decisions on many occasions will in essence make the PBSC redundant or obsolete. Given the PBSC's focus on decision-making by consensus, it is difficult for the top leader to monopolize policies that cross into the purview of other PBSC members. Rather, the top leader needs to consult his colleagues who have a significant stake and interest in policies in question. The top leader in general could weigh in more heavily in the decision-making process, but whether other PBSC members agree with his policy recommendations largely depends on his political authority and power. With the establishment of a NSC, the top leader is the Chairman, who supersedes his deputies and other members of the NSC. A truly effective NSC could possibly undermine and at least dilute the PBSC's ultimate authority.

Second, the establishment of a true NSC in China would inevitably touch on the other set of important relationships, that of civil-military relations. For instance, who has seats on the NSC and who has a final say on policies are two practical issues. The PLA has enjoyed a unique status in China's political system, with two seats on the Party's Politburo, where the real political power has resided since 1992. By contrast, since 2002, the top diplomat, the State Councilor on Foreign Affairs, has not had a seat on the Politburo, much less the Foreign Minister, who is subordinate to the State Councilor on foreign affairs. Another way to see this problem is that the Vice Chairman of the CMC, who is always a full general, enjoys the same status as the first-ranking Vice Prime Minister, while the Foreign Minister has an administrative status equal to that of a provincial governor or the Chief of a Division in the PLA. Thus, the top PLA soldiers – the two CMC Vice Chairmen – outrank not only the Foreign Minister and State

Councilors, but also all other ministers such as ministers of finance), commerce, CIA (state security), and public security.⁴⁴ This huge gap that exists between the political ranking of the military and the civilian foreign affairs system makes it difficult for their representatives to sit at the same table on equal footing. However, if China borrows the U.S. experience, where ranking is determined by the relevance of missions and mandates as well as expertise, the MFA would be the first among equals in providing policy recommendations. This would tip the scales of the civil-military balance, unless some modifications could be made to the bureaucratic cultures of both the MFA and the PLA.

The NSC also faces potential opposition and obstruction from ministries, weak or strong. Ministries with strong bureaucratic powers such as Ministry of Public Security (MPS) would see the NSC as a powerful challenger that infringes on the MPS's primacy in areas it specializes in. For weaker bureaucracies such as MFA, NSC represents another "mother-in-law" and adds another layer of supervision, which risks weakening MFA even further.⁴⁵

This leads to the question of why Xi insisted on building such a super agency as soon as he took power. David M. Lampton argued that constructing "new institutional pathways" is a method Xi used to "shape policy and bring in new people not so beholden to the previous constellation of interests."⁴⁶ Additionally, "Xi Jinping is...using the creation of the NSC to seek to consolidate his personal sway in the domestic security, foreign policy, and military realms. In short, Xi is both driving to achieve better policy coordination and greater personal control in the system."⁴⁷

Despite all the hurdles mentioned above, Xi managed to accomplish the task of establishing a NSC due to his rapid consolidation of power, respectable family

background, solid support from the PLA, and sweeping anti-corruption campaign, which removed potential opposition. The NSC's membership remains a tightly-held secret. Based on the interviews with officials of pertinent agencies, it includes members from the MFA, the international propaganda/communication apparatus (*waixuan*), Ministry of Public Security, the judicial system, Ministry of State Security, military intelligence (the PLA GSD 2nd and 3rd Departments), political warfare (the PLA GPD Liaison Department), the People's Armed Police, and possibly the State Oceanic Administration.⁴⁸

While establishing the NSC was in and of itself a major accomplishment, challenges to the new NSC are enormous due to the hurdles explained above. It is apparent that tension over the NSC's establishment remains, as evidenced by the slow process and opaque nature of the NSC in terms of deciding upon the leadership and their respective roles, the personnel make-up,⁴⁹ and its decision-making procedures.⁵⁰

One can expect Xi's opponents to push back and attempt to sabotage the NSC, which may either undermine its authority or disrupt its ability to function. Xi managed to announce the establishment of the NSC in November 2013 during the Third Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party's 18th Congress in the form of a resolution of the CCPCC.⁵¹ However, the Politburo meeting in January 2014 passed a resolution to change the name of the NSC to the Central National Security Commission. This name change, according to China's political practice, equates to asserting that this organization is a part of the Party system, which then mandates its subordination to the CCPCC Politburo and the PBSC.⁵² Based on the Party Constitution passed by the 18th Party Congress, the CCPCC has the authority to implement the Party Congress's resolutions and lead the

Party's work, while the Politburo has the authority to implement and even refine but not *change* the CCPCC's resolutions.⁵³

Xi is heading China's inaugural NSC, assisted by Premier Li Keqiang and Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC, who are the top three members of the PBSC. Among the four PBSC members who are not sitting on the NSC, Wang Qishan and Yu Zhengsheng are known to be Xi's political allies. Therefore, in the NSC's establishment the real losers are Liu Yunshan and Zhang Gaoli. Liu Yunshan, the ideology and propaganda Tsar,⁵⁴ has been cracking down on liberal voices. Liu truncated Southern Weekend's 2013 New Year editorial, which originally advocated rule by Constitution.⁵⁵ The power struggle between Xi and Liu led to a public warning by Xi in a Politburo meeting on 22-25 June 2013 that "comrades of the Politburo shall be a good model and voluntarily protect the Party leadership's authority."⁵⁶ Zhang Gaoli, the first ranking Vice Premier overseeing finance, climate change and the environment, has been sidelined and remained in a much weaker position to challenge Xi.⁵⁷

Although Zhang Dejiang obtained a seat on the NSC, his loss of power on the PBSC probably outweighed his gains on the NSC, which explains why Zhang has tried to torpedo the NSC.⁵⁸ Zhang clashed with Xi over the abolishment of forced labor camps (*laogai*), an institution Xi personally abhorred,⁵⁹ and how to deal with Hong Kong's future.⁶⁰

According to China's legal doctrine, only the NPC could abolish the *laogai* institution. The CCPCC passed a resolution in November 2012 announcing the abolition of *laogai*. After Meng Jianzhu, Secretary of the Political and Legal Commission, announced in January 2013 the plan to end and abolish the *Laogai* institution within a

year,⁶¹ the national congress of the NPC held in March failed to release any draft on *laogai* reform. Premier Li Keqiang, at the press conference of this congress, promised to “revise” this institution by the end of 2013. The NPC, headed by Zhang Dejiang, strongly resisted Xi and Li’s efforts. When the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Party Congress was held in November 2013, the NPC blocked any move on revising or abolishing *laogai*, which drove Premier Li to announce that the State Council first initiated *Laogai* and therefore it could *abolish Laogai* without notifying the NPC. On December 28 2013, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed a resolution ending all relevant laws and regulations of the “re-education through labor” system, i.e., *laogai*. As a compromise, a new system called “illegal activities correction,” or *weijiao*, was introduced.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC), headed by Zhang Dejiang, issued a controversial “decision” on proposed reforms to the Hong Kong electoral system on August 31 2014, which triggered massive “Occupy Central” protests in Hong Kong.⁶² Xi allegedly disagreed with Zhang’s position and subsequent tough approach, despite the fact that Hong Kong affairs is part of Zhang’s mandate, who heads the Central Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Coordination Group. When meeting with Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in November 2014, Xi broke precedent by not expressing his approval publicly about Leung⁶³ and did not openly support the “831 Decision.” Zhang was conspicuously absent from this meeting, which is highly unusual for a PBSC member in charge of this line of work.

As of early 2015, the establishment of NSC clearly served the dual purpose: dissolving the power of Central Political and Legal Commission, by including the domestic stability and security as one of its missions; and foreign and security policy-

making. There is not enough evidence to determine whether and how China's new NSC works. The long-delayed announcement of its leading personnel as well as the lack of transparency both in its other designated officials how it works indicate that turf wars are still ongoing. The awkward and unexplained coexistence of leading small groups with the NSC further reveals that turf wars between Xi and other PBSC members are unresolved.

Interactions: PLA Versus MFA

The following section examines how the MFA and PLA coordinate with each other through both formal and informal channels, by explaining the coordinating mechanisms on paper and evaluating the actual effectiveness of their interactions. By introducing four rules that govern their interactions, one can see in cases when the PLA and MFA disagree with each other which side is most likely to win and how that side wins.

When Zhou Enlai oversaw China's foreign affairs, the MFA had a natural bond with the military. In the 1950s, most of the diplomats, especially Foreign Ministers Ji Pengfei, Wu Xueqian, and Qian Qichen, either had a background in combat or experience in underground resistance and military intelligence.⁶⁴ Those who composed the military leadership were comrades of and subordinate to Zhou and Marshal Chen Yi, who served as Foreign Minister after Zhou. While Chen was Foreign Minister, he also served as Vice Chairman of the CMC. The Central Committee and the Central Military Committee once issued the order to "select one officer at the division level and two officers at the regiment level from each corps with a minimum of middle-school education."⁶⁵ The MFA "borrowed" a total of 20 military officers to be ambassadors, six of whom became

Vice Foreign Ministers, including Ji Pengfei, Yuan Zhongxian, Geng Biao, Huang Zhen (father-in-law of Dai Bingguo), Wang Youping, and Han Nianlong. These “General Ambassadors” were allowed to maintain their military IDs while serving as diplomats. Among the twenty “General Ambassadors” was Geng Biao, who after serving as an ambassador from 1950-71 returned to the military to serve as Defense Minister (1981-83). The last of the “General Ambassadors” was Ding Guoyu, who finished his term as Ambassador in 1984.⁶⁶

Coordination between the civilian foreign affairs system and the military before the mid-1980s was seamless, in the sense that both were tightly controlled by a handful of people who formed China’s first generation of leadership, and that they knew each other so well at the personal level. Such smooth coordination was also made possible because China’s relationship with the outside world was fairly limited, and therefore personal knowledge, experiences, and convictions normally did not diverge from one another. However, Deng’s campaign in the 1980s to send the military back to the barracks cut off the one-way rotation from the PLA to the MFA. Additionally, the MFA’s new retirement system replaced the old generation of diplomats with “technocrats and professionals.” These two policies catalyzed the revolution of professionalization that swept the MFA.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the two bureaucracies, the MFA and the military, started to separate, specialize, and grow apart. As the personal bonds between diplomats and soldiers weakened, formal institutionalized coordination mechanisms became important.

Inter-agency Cooperation (or lack thereof) Between the MFA and PLA

In addition to mechanisms such as leading small groups and the newly-established National Security Commission, the PLA and MFA have established four forms of direct interagency coordination that are tasked with solving policy differences: direct division/department channels, contingency-based task forces, permanent multi-agency coordination mechanisms, and informal engagements.

1. Direct division/department channels:

The MFA and PLA use formal direct channels to communicate with each other only when handling an actual issue or situation that requires the other side's cooperation for implementation. The most common contacts are initiated through division/department-level channels between the MFA and PLA, though these contacts are made on behalf of minister-level authorities (*buji mingyi*). Both the MFA and PLA have to decide who will be its lead contact (*qiantou bumen*). The divisions/departments assuming the roles of lead contact will draft a document that is signed by all relevant divisions/departments within either the MFA or PLA. Most disagreements are resolved at the level of departments/divisions (*siji bumen*). These departments will contact and communicate with each other by phone. If the issue is highly sensitive, these discussions will be conducted over "red phones" or special hotlines (*baomi dianhua* or *jiyao dianhua*). If such consultations and discussions are unable to resolve these disagreements, departments/divisions will hold coordination meetings. They can also attach their own opinions to the original document and ask for high-level intervention. For the MFA, in most situations, documents are transported through the Confidential Traffic Division (*jiyao jiaotongchu*) under its General Office. During emergencies, lower-level staffers

need to run to other ministries with the documents that need signatures and bring them back to MFA, a practice known as “running signature” (*paoqian*).⁶⁸

For the MFA, which agency will serve as its point of contact depends on the nature and significance of the issue in question. Its lead agency on an issue could be a functional departments/division like the Department of Arms Control, or it could be a regional division such as the Department of Asian Affairs. Issues often touch on multiple departments within the MFA, in which case the department closest to the issue and with greatest expertise is often designated as the lead agency. If the department that would typically handle an issue happens to be busy dealing with a major contingency, the leading role could be handed to another relevant department within the MFA. The department tasked with representing the MFA on a certain issue then coordinates with the other relevant departments within the MFA and deals with the PLA and other external policy actors.

Personalities and the history of bureaucratic relationships are important factors that influence the effectiveness of inter-agency coordination. An officer of the GSD FAO indicated that his organization, in general, has difficulty coordinating with the MFA, though his office has relationships of varying strength depending on which department within the MFA it is dealing with. “We have very tense relationships with some departments of MFA but have slightly better communications with others,” said this PLA officer. “GSD has explicit and serious disagreements with MFA. Our differences are deep and wide. When it comes to any issue relevant to (China’s) security interests, MFA must consult with the PLA.”⁶⁹ MFA officials complain that their PLA interlocutors are often uncooperative and even arrogant in their communications with the MFA. “On several

major issues, (the PLA interlocutors) started the conversations by asking, ‘do you want us to open fires or not? If you do, we will go ahead. If you don’t, say whatever you like to and it is none of our business,’” said a mid-level MFA official.⁷⁰

2. Issue-based and contingency-based task forces:

Issue-based task forces are narrowly focused on building interagency cooperation for one issue, while temporary, contingency-based interagency task forces are established to respond to a short-term crisis. Among all the mechanisms, these issue- and contingency-based meetings are still the most frequently used channel of interaction between the PLA and the MFA.⁷¹ For example, the Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, established in 2011-12, belongs to the category of issue-based task forces. A task force was set up to prepare for potential contingencies during the Beijing Olympic Games, which put agencies such as the MFA, PLA, Ministry of Public Security, and Ministry of State Security together. A Diaoyu Island (Dispute) Contingency Task Force, headed by Xi Jinping, was established in 2013, which is composed of agencies including the MFA, PLA, intelligence community, and oceanic paramilitary forces. More low-level inter-agency task forces were set up to deal with contingencies such as the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya in 2011.⁷²

When crises threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of Chinese citizens, such as emergent public security threats, natural disasters, catastrophic terrorist attacks, or civil unrest, the crisis response mechanism within the Chinese civilian system would be triggered. The most urgent crisis response, known as a “level-one crisis response,” (*yiji xiangying*) would lead to the swift establishment of a Headquarters of International Contingency and Crisis Response (*shewai tufa shijian yingji zongzhihuibu*)

within the State Council. At this crisis level the PLA would automatically be part of this mechanism, participating through its Office of Emergency Command in Handling Contingencies (*jundui chuzhi tufa shijian lingdao xiaozu bangongshi*), which is a part of the PLA General Staff. This office, established in 2005, shares contingency information and intelligence with 20 civilian entities.⁷³ A “level-two crisis response” (*erji xiangying*) would lead, upon the State Council’s approval, to the establishment of an Interagency Joint Meeting (*buji lianxi huiyi*). The PLA, however, is not a default member of this Joint Meeting mechanism. For instance, during the 2014 crisis management effort that was initiated after Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 (MH370) went missing, the Joint Meeting, led by the MFA, included more than 12 ministries and agencies, but the PLA was initially not included. The PLA General Staff, and the PLA Navy and Air Force were part of a search and rescue interagency meeting led by the Ministry of Transportation, which was also joined by China’s Coast Guard, Aviation Administration, and General Customs. The PLA was not included in the Joint Meeting until its second meeting.⁷⁴

Depending on the nature and relevance of the issue at hand, either the MFA or the PLA could initiate the contact. Points of contact on both sides have to hold similar bureaucratic rank. On the PLA side, the GSD/MND Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) is the MFA’s main point of contact when it comes to diplomatic issues, while the PLA GSD Operations Department and its relevant bureaus is the primary avenue for coordination on substantive policy issues. The MFA communicates and coordinates with both the PLA General Politics Department and the PLA General Logistics Department, but much less so compared with the GSD Operations Department and the GSD FAO.

Issue-based task forces work on mandates established through international agreements and are therefore obliged to maintain their operations indefinitely. Contingency-based task forces are normally terminated soon after the crisis passes. However, these contingency-based task forces, which during long-lasting crises also continue to operate for a long period of time, are mostly ineffective over the long run unless they receive high-level attention from top leaders. This ineffectiveness is due to the MFA's division-level agencies are constantly short-staffed and overstretched. As a result, in some instances one staff member will be assigned to shoulder the responsibility of several inter-agency coordination task forces. In reality, he or she does not adequately contribute to any of these task forces.

3. Permanent interagency coordination mechanisms:

When contingencies reoccur and become a repeating pattern, the contingency-based Joint Meeting mechanism, though designed to be temporary, could eventually become a permanent mechanism, such as the Joint Meeting on Overseas Chinese Protection. This mechanism played an effective role in the highly publicized incidents such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami⁷⁵, the Kyrgyzstan riot of 2010,⁷⁶ and the Libyan war in 2011, in responding to the crisis and planning the evacuation of Chinese citizens.

Some permanent interagency coordination mechanisms are foisted on China from the outside. These coordination mechanisms are created out of some bilateral or international consensus and therefore feel the need to outline and successfully achieve deliverables. However, these mechanisms can evaporate if the consensus that formed them breaks. For example, based on the Sino-U.S. agreement in April 2013, the office of the Cyber Working Group was established in June of that year under MFA to coordinate

Sino-U.S. dialogues and cooperation on cyber security.⁷⁷ However, this mechanism was disbanded in mid-2014 following the U.S.'s indictment of five PLA officers that it accused of cyber theft.

Coordination mechanisms with international participation may alter the dynamics of these mechanisms' operations. The U.S. pushed for a Strategic Security Dialogue (SSD) to be added to the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED), which has become the only bilateral platform for Chinese and American civilian and military officials to discuss sensitive security issues in the same room.⁷⁸ Many in the PLA mistakenly perceived the SSD as an "innovation" of Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, who was disliked by many military analysts, despite the fact that the SSD was actually the "brainchild of U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg."⁷⁹ The PLA fundamentally disliked the idea of the SSD, in which the PLA took the lead, being integrated as a "component" of another forum that the MFA would lead.

Rear Admiral Guan Youfei, the Deputy Chief of the PLA GSD Foreign Affairs Office and a relatively low-ranking PLA officer, attended the 2008 U.S.-China SSD Working Lunch. For the first reintegrated S&ED in 2009, the U.S. sent military representatives such as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy and PACOM Commander Admiral Timothy Keating. Yet the PLA still sent out Rear Admiral Guan as its counterpart for a separate session of military dialogues. This probably prompted President Obama to stress during the S&ED that increased ties between the two countries' militaries could "diminish causes for disputes while providing a framework for cooperation."

The second SE&D was held in Beijing in May 2010. Even though the PLA suspended some mil-to-mil exchanges with the U.S. to protest U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, the U.S. still sent high-level military representatives to the meeting, including PACOM Commander Admiral Robert Willard and Assistant Secretary of Defense Wallace Gregson. The U.S. representatives met separately with Air Force General Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of General Staff, and Rear Admiral Guan, for contentious meetings.

The PLA snubbed both the MFA and the U.S. in order to indicate its displeasure with being relegated to a platform in which it had to follow the MFA's lead in front of a foreign audience. For the inaugural round of the SSD in Washington in May 2011, which took place during the 3rd round of the S&ED, the U.S. side again sent high-level military representatives such as Under Secretary Fournoy, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General James Cartwright, and Admiral Willard. However, on the Chinese side, only General Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of General Staff, attended the dialogue.⁸⁰ General Chen Bingde, Chief of General Staff, chose to visit the U.S. (May 15-22) less than a week after the SSD had concluded (May 9-10).⁸¹ The fifth SE&D was held on 3-4 May 2012 in Beijing while Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie visited Washington on 4-10 May and therefore dodged the SSD dialogue. As one senior PLA officer remarked, "The PLA values the symbolic meaning of holding a seat at FALSG. But in terms of substance, we have better and more direct channels to influence the boss (*lao da*). The PLA resents platforms of dialogues in which the PLA does not play a lead role, such as the SSD. When Ma Xiaotian was in position and had to attend a mechanism which is not led by the PLA, he dealt with it half-heartedly." As another senior PLA officer explained, "Ma Xiaotian made it a mere formality (at SSD). Liang's visit expressed the

PLA's point abundantly clear: the PLA likes to talk to the U.S. military, but not through SSD, a dialogue essentially chaired and controlled by the MFA.”⁸²

China's civil-military relationship has its own dynamic. The American proposal for a civilian-led platform joined by soldiers in front of outside players was well-intentioned, but in reality any initiative that would fundamental change the relationship between the PLA and the MFA has to come from within China's own political power arrangements and these bureaucracies themselves.

4. Informal engagements:

The PLA and MFA have low-level avenues for communication and coordination, which are mostly initiated as a result of projects individuals under either the PLA or MFA took on that require inter-agency coordination. For example, a PLA GSD Foreign Affairs Office staffer always has a counterpart in the MFA's Department of Arms Control, whom he/she is supposed to contact regularly. Contact could be initiated by either side, for instance if one party needs to write a report on a certain issue that requires understanding the other agency's point of view. These personal contacts, if handled well, could contribute to enhanced communication between the two bureaucracies.

MFA needs these channels for informal communication as well to handle its “*guanxi*” or relationship with the PLA for when it needs the PLA's consent on certain policy proposals. The MFA initiated an informal engagement when it sought the PLA's approval for the 2002 Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). The PLA internally criticized and resisted the DOC, which was a non-binding political statement that committed the parties involved to certain rules of the road in the South China Sea. MFA officials in turn launched a charm offensive and used informal

engagements to try to reduce the military's resistance.⁸³ In the end, the PLA reluctantly agreed to support the DOC and China and ASEAN member states signed the document.

Other informal channels that the MFA and PLA utilize to engage each other include the CCP Central Party School's high-level training programs. The Central Party School regularly holds classes (*xuexi ban*) for senior Party officials in government and the military. The classes' teachers and speakers are sometimes brought in from institutions outside the Central Party School. These classes and programs have been one of the major informal channels for senior officials to socialize and network with their counterparts from other state bureaucracies, the Party, and the military.

The PLA also seeks to communicate with outside experts, including experts from the MFA, by holding seminars and conferences through its own universities and academies. However, the PLA General Staff Department Foreign Affairs Office, when holding policy consultations, almost never invites MFA officials or experts from institutions affiliated with the MFA.⁸⁴

Bureaucratic Hurdles for Inter-agency Coordination

Direct inter-agency coordination between the PLA and the MFA faces bureaucratic hurdles due to: a disparity in the political ranking of their respective leadership; differences in bureaucratic culture; and a gap of knowledge in personnel.

First, differences in policy positions are exacerbated by the PLA's elevated status in Chinese politics relative to the MFA. As a hierarchical organization, the PLA fundamentally values official ranks. The military's top leaders, the Vice Chairmen of the CMC, are both Politburo members, holding a rank equivalent to that of the Vice Premier

of the State Council, at State Deputy level (*fuguoji*). Both Vice Chairmen are included in the category of “Party and National (State) leaders.” Their prestige and ranking not only far exceeds the Foreign Minister’s, but also surpasses that of State Counselor on foreign affairs, neither of which is considered a “Party and State leader.”

Second, the MFA and PLA have distinctively different bureaucratic cultures, which could become hurdles during inter-agency coordination. MFA has a relatively flat organizational structure, and formulates policy positions mostly through consensus-building. Therefore, the MFA’s divisions and departments cooperate with each other more easily and more readily than other bureaucracies. The horizontal transfer of chiefs and deputy chiefs of various divisions and departments is fairly common and institutionalized, which helps reduce parochialism and departmental/divisional interests. For the MFA’s bureaucrats, there is no point in feuding with another division, since one could find oneself transferred to that division in the future. Such a bureaucratic culture leads to policy assessments and prescriptions reflecting broad consensus, but often lacking creativity or ingenuity.⁸⁵

The PLA’s component pieces are much more hierarchical than those of the MFA (explained in greater detail in Chapter 2), although its structure follows the standard practice of “countersignature” or “joint signature (*huiqian*), like all of China’s other bureaucracies. The chains of the PLA’s decision-making are relatively shorter than the MFA’s. The transfer of personnel back and forth from one agency to another, at the same pay grade, is much less common in the PLA than in the MFA. For example, the personnel of the Operations Department (also called the 1st Department) of the PLA General Staff and the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) of the PLA GSD, or the personnel of the 1st

Department and 2nd Department (intelligence) of the General Staff, very rarely rotate with each other. Therefore, the divisional interests in the PLA are more clearly delineated. Additionally, the boundaries of interests are more respected for fear that during the enforcement stage the aggrieved department will sabotage or resist the department that crossed the line. Therefore, the PLA's assessment of issues and policy recommendations for addressing them are more pointed or sharper than the MFA's.⁸⁶

Another aspect of the difference in bureaucratic culture of the two is the level of rigidity in changing its position. The PLA has often been found to be slower to get off its hardline position, as evidenced by its reluctance to restart the mil-to-mil relationship with the U.S. after U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. However, compared to the MFA, the PLA, especially those in mid-level functional positions, was less willing to suspend the mil-to-mil relationship for selling arms to Taiwan in the first place.⁸⁷ In the end, the PLA has more to lose than the MFA when Sino-U.S. military contacts are suspended.⁸⁸ The PLA's preferred policy position is to persuade the U.S. that if "you give Taiwan something, then give us something too."⁸⁹ However, the MFA typically shifts more quickly to a softer approach to the U.S., as long as it sees the potential benefits of such an approach in other areas. Meanwhile, the PLA finds it more difficult to adjust its position unless it sees tangible compromises from the U.S. that benefit the PLA.

Finally, the PLA and MFA's personnel have contrasting areas and levels of knowledge, experience, and expertise. The MFA's staff rotates between posts in embassies and their division/department or among departments/divisions much more frequently, on a three- or four-year basis, in order to stay on the promotion track. MFA staff can also more easily than their PLA counterparts get overseas training opportunities

or even leave the MFA to pursue advanced education and training inside or outside of China. Therefore, the PLA's staff involved in policy-making areas stays on average much longer in one position than the MFA's staff. The PLA's staff is likely to be more seasoned and experienced in the areas they work on than their interlocutors in the MFA. The knowledge gap between the lower-ranking staff members of the PLA and MFA is revealed during direct interactions between the two agencies, creating a certain amount of arrogance in the PLA when dealing with the MFA.⁹⁰ In recent years, the PLA has gradually lowered the rank of military officers who regularly communicate and coordinate with the MFA. As of 2013, the military rank of such officers is that of Field Officer (*xiaoguan*), while the MFA interlocutor's corresponding rank is that of Deputy Chief or Chief of Division.⁹¹

While bureaucratic hurdles exist in inter-agency coordination between the PLA and the MFA, the PLA is incentivized to cooperate with the MFA on a narrow range of issues. As the PLA has not changed its long-standing policy of not seeking overseas military bases, it relies on the MFA and its embassies to help negotiate deals with littoral countries to supply and provide docking for its military ships and airplanes. As the PLA Navy aspires to become a blue-water force and operate in distant seas, the PLA will increasingly need the MFA to strike diplomatic deals. This was evidenced during the case of the 2011 evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya, in which the PLA sent out 12 military airplanes and one frigate to evacuate Chinese citizens but had to rely on the MFA to negotiate the logistics and supplies.⁹²

Rules of the Game: Who Wins and under what Conditions

The following section outlines important “rules” that determine whether the PLA wins or loses policy battles. Such rules are: advantage of early entry during times of overwhelming external threats; advantage of strong allies/weak opponents (disadvantage of strong opponents); advantage of strong motivations; and advantage of public opinion. Substantial empirical evidence of results – policies made or un-made – support these rules, though only a few illustrative cases are discussed in this section.

Some rules combine with others, compounding and magnifying the PLA’s impact on events. For example, a persistent overwhelming external threat may make the PLA highly motivated, silence opponents, and stir up public opinion. In other instances, different rules indicate divergent directions, potentially offsetting one another. What is the outcome when the PLA is highly motivated, but its opponents are powerful and equally motivated? In such a scenario, the policy-making process and debate will mostly likely hit an impasse, which means the PLA is not likely to get its way, while its opponents may not realize their goals completely. Then, each bureaucracy will undertake actions consistent with its own beliefs and understanding, until this impasse is broken either by a powerful leader’s intervention, or when the situation evolves to clearly justify one solution over another. Bureaucracies will try to avoid an impasse by choosing the second-best option, which is to negotiate a package deal whereby each gets something it wants.

Advantage of Exclusive Access or Expertise

The PLA generally gains an upper hand in influencing the final policy decision when the issues at hand are convincingly defined as unequivocally concerning China's territorial integrity or national security. The reason is that the PLA has irreplaceable and exclusive expertise in war and defense issues. As one senior PLA officer stated:

The more military pressure a security crisis creates, the more needed the military is to speak. The more pressing the crisis or contingency is, the more China's top leader needs to hear from the military what military options are. A militarized crisis, if prolonged, will inevitably enhance the military's voice and influence on the final decision. When prolonged security tensions with an overwhelming threat of war exist, the PLA is almost guaranteed to have a seat at the table and be consulted.⁹³

American analysts have observed that in the American context, "defense issues are simply more politically compelling than foreign policy issues for elected officials."⁹⁴ This conclusion is even truer in the Chinese context, given the Chinese leadership's constant worry about China's survival and the Party's stability and legitimacy. Threats resonate more easily than opportunities with Chinese officials and citizens.

In his seminal book analyzing the development of military doctrines during the interwar period, Barry R. Posen found that when there was a looming threat of war, balance of power theory tended to explain the policy outcome best.⁹⁵ Under this circumstance, the decision-making process is explained in terms of the government as a rational actor that tries to "maximize strategic goals and objectives."⁹⁶ Therefore, in times of an overwhelming external threat, bureaucratic infighting and bargaining become less intense, while different bureaucracies are forced to make a more concerted effort to coordinate their actions. As Posen elaborates, "In times of relative international calm, when statesmen and soldiers perceive the probability of war as remote, the organizational dynamics...tend to operate. When threats appear greater, or war appears more probable, balancing behavior occurs. A key element of that behavior is greater civilian attention to matters military."⁹⁷

Despite the fact that the above conclusions on decision-making were made in the context of examining democratic regimes, they can explain the interactions of the Chinese military and foreign ministry. Additional reasons for the PLA's more prominent position can be found in the Chinese policy context:

When a significant external threat looms, two things will happen: first, the top leader will serve as the ultimate decision-maker and arbiter, and therefore the MFA will be demoted to a lower link in the decision-making chain; second, the decision-making will naturally require military expertise, and therefore the PLA will inevitably be consulted. As the overwhelming external threat persists, the chances are that the PLA will have increased opportunities to talk to the top leader directly, through the CMC and in person.⁹⁸ However, this does not guarantee that the top leader will take the military's advice once he hears it. Nonetheless, the military will have a greater opportunity than the MFA to frame the issue and provide its intelligence and assessment. The MFA, however, is not completely powerless during times of grave external threat. If the issue requires the decision between peace and war, it will be a matter for discussion at the Politburo, in order to share responsibility or blame with the top leader, which is a venue where the MFA can constrain the top leader and the military if it disagrees with the decision.

Compromises that the PLA made can be found in instances where there was an imminent threat of war. For example, in 1987 China and India stood at the brink of war. However, China chose to deescalate precisely because of military considerations. In early 1987, PLA border troops encountered Indian troops during what the PLA asserted was a "routine border patrol" and shot and captured more than 16 Indian soldiers after, according to China, the Indian army opened fire. The two militaries stood at a standoff

for over two months and came very close to war.⁹⁹ The two countries' diplomats successfully negotiated a simultaneous withdrawal from the disputed region and the PLA agreed to this proposal primarily because of military calculations – it wanted to avoid a two-front war, as its war with Vietnam had not completely ended. During both phases – saber rattling and backing off – the PLA critically influenced China's decision-making.¹⁰⁰

The PLA, like all other militaries, monopolizes the use of force or violence. Because the PLA understands the advantage that exclusive expertise grants it during the policy process, it tries to monopolize all aspects of military affairs, such as mil-to-mil contacts, and deliberation and establishment of military confidence-building measures. For example, as the mainland and Taiwan began to improve their relationship after President Ma took power in 2008, Shanghai-based scholars and government-dominated NGOs that already developed great knowledge and an extensive network in Taiwan were active in moving beyond economic and cultural exchanges and searching for ways to enhance mil-to-mil trust between both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Even without the military expertise that the PLA has, these non-military scholars and organizations have one thing the PLA lacks in this area — their network of contacts in Taiwan, knowledge and history of interacting with Taiwanese, and more freedom and less reluctance to reach out to Taiwan's retired military officers. Also, the Chinese government has been interested in generating momentum and building military CBMs with Taiwan. However, the PLA was displeased with this development and tried to exclude other actors from prying into areas in which it so far has displayed the most expertise. The PLA opposition frustrated the Central Affairs Office's (CAO, under the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group) efforts to fund this project. "The CAO does not say no, but it does not say yes

either. It just drags its feet until we no longer pursue and we understand why,” said a Shanghai-based scholar.¹⁰¹

Advantage of Strong Allies / Disadvantage of Strong Opponents

When the PLA disagrees with the MFA on certain policies, support from politically powerful allies can greatly strengthen the military’s voice. For the PLA, any powerful political actor, which is not solely limited to bureaucracies,¹⁰² could become its ally or opponent. Who become the PLA’s allies depends mostly on the issue at hand, historic relations between the two actors, and the sense of a shared common concern. A long history of cooperation and shared principles could bond the PLA with a particular agency more easily on policy issues. Such a relationship can be found between the PLA and the State Oceanic Administration/Coastal Surveillance, and the PLA and the Administration of General Customs.

Common concerns and priorities regarding security issues could align the PLA with two other security-focused agencies, the Ministry of State Security (MSS) and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). However, MSS and MPS in particular could become either powerful allies or strong opponents of the PLA, depending on the particular policy issue. Each of the three security-focused bureaucracies independently operates intelligence collection and analysis channels, which are rarely shared with other agencies. Erecting bureaucracies with overlapping functions was probably intended to make it difficult for each bureaucracy with sensitive and important information, such as the failure of an operation, to conceal it from the top leader. Having powerful allies on board

often strengthens the PLA's case; however, having strong opponents often leads to delays, stalemates, and indecision.

In 2008-09, both Afghanistan and the U.S. requested that Xinjiang's Wakhan Corridor be opened to NATO troops, with the goal of opening a new supply line for its forces in Afghanistan. President Karzai in August 2008, and his Vice President Mohammad Karim Khalili in October 2009, requested that Beijing consider building road links between Badakhshan Province in Afghanistan and Xinjiang Province in China by developing the Wakhan Corridor.¹⁰³ In the U.S.-China Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of President Obama's visit to China in November 2009, China promised to "support" the "efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight terrorism, maintain domestic stability and to achieve sustainable economic and social development." In January 2010, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown also urged China to consider sending troops to Afghanistan, which would make China's opening of the Wakhan Corridor inevitable. China did not explicitly oppose this proposal and agreed to consider it. By mid-2010, it was clear that China had ruled it out, primarily because of opposition from the military.

The PLA CMC decided against this proposal based on multiple considerations:¹⁰⁴

First, the PLA was worried that opening the Wakhan Corridor to help the U.S. military would upset the Taliban to such a degree that the Taliban would launch retaliatory terrorist attacks against China and strengthen its support of the Uighur separatists in Xinjiang.¹⁰⁵ This would undermine China's efforts to stabilize Xinjiang. In the PLA's opinion, Americans will "leave eventually after the war but China will be the perpetual neighbor of Afghanistan. If China arouses resentment from the Islamic world, it may drag China down strategically."¹⁰⁶

Second, the PLA decided against this proposal because it did not fully support the U.S. war in Afghanistan. In the PLA's opinion, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) did not authorize the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom).

Third, the PLA worried that approving such a project would not just entail having American supplies passing through the Wakhan Corridor. Rather, the PLA was concerned that this would have driven the U.S. military and its intelligence services to expand their footprints in the supply line's vicinity to protect it.¹⁰⁷ The PLA believed that this would have spillover effects, increasing the international publicity of this trouble-prone region, encouraging Uighur separatism, and changing the dynamics of the local separatist movement.¹⁰⁸

Finally, The PLA has confidence in its ability to guard the border between China and Afghanistan from the Taliban and other hostile forces through patrols, heavy militia involvement, and border checks.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the utility of supporting the war in Afghanistan to solve China's own problem in Xinjiang does not outweigh the risk of embroiling China in a U.S.-led war against Islamic radicalism. Whether China could "stabilize Xinjiang eventually depends mainly on China's capability of handling its own problems," said Wang Baofu, Deputy Director of Institute of Strategic Studies of the PLA National Defense University.¹¹⁰

The MPS and MSS, which have tremendous influence on matters related to Xinjiang and counter-terrorism, both supported the PLA's approach. MPS has been China's lead agency in directing counter-terrorism efforts. The Minister of Public Security has been heading the State Counter-terrorism Affairs Coordination Small Group,

which was established in 2001 and elevated in 2013 to the State Counter-terrorism Leading Small Group.¹¹¹ The State Counter-terrorism Bureau, established in 2002, is housed within MPS and guides, plans, coordinates, and supervises the implementation of counter-terrorism measures through top-down agencies at each level of local government. MPS ardently opposes any measure that could potentially complicate its mission by adding external actors, and worsening its cooperation with the police forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹¹²

All three of these organizations (PLA, MPS, MSS) stood against the MFA and Xinjiang's local government. MFA supported this deal because the U.S. had just elected a new president (Obama), and this would be a strong deliverable on the Chinese side to strengthen Sino-U.S. relations and boost mutual trust between the two countries. MFA also advocated for this proposal because by providing help to American and NATO forces, China could use this as a bargaining chip to persuade the EU to lift its arms embargo levied against China. Xinjiang's local government favored such a deal because it welcomed the potential economic benefits. In the end, the PLA's view prevailed, though it with a total victory for the PLA. China never publicly opposed the deal, but it did not progress, indicating the impasse that this policy proposal caused.

Organizations can simultaneously partner with the PLA in one area and oppose it in another. One major difference between the PLA and MPS is their position regarding China's policy toward Burma and its Kokang region. Kokang (*guogan*), a self-administrative region of Burma's Shan State, is populated by mostly ethnic Han Chinese and historically has deep ties to China.¹¹³ Peng Jiasheng (also known as Phon Kya Shin) has led the Kokang rebel force since 1989. Bai Suocheng, Peng's deputy, had been the

point of contact to assist China's Ministry of Public Security in its efforts to fight prostitution, gambling, and the illegal drug trade along the Sino-Burmese border. Having won the MPS's trust, Bai supplied it with false intelligence,¹¹⁴ which led to a joint assault by the Burmese military and Chinese MPS officers against Peng in August 2009. This assault occurred despite a two-decade-long ceasefire between Peng and the Burmese military.¹¹⁵ Therefore, MPS was tricked and unwittingly helped the Burmese military strike a pro-China force in Burma. Following this incident, the differences the PLA has with other bureaucratic agencies on the Kokang issue widened. The PLA had internal debates on the Kokang issue, but most strategists believed they should keep the pro-China Kokang force alive for either historic or humanitarian reasons.¹¹⁶ Only the MSS joined the PLA as an ally, as MSS and MPA have a highly competitive and antagonistic relationship with each other.¹¹⁷ Having taken an irreversible step, the MPS was more fixated than ever on cracking down on drug trafficking and other illegal activities in the border region. The MFA's approach is to "maintain stability" (*weiwén*) and "stay away from troubles" (*buzhao mafan*), so it supports the policy of cutting off support to the Kokang forces and helping the Burmese military take down the rebels.¹¹⁸ The local government in Yunnan wants to open its border with Burma to increase border trade and promote Yunnan's regional economy, so its primary concern is to maintain stability along the Sino-Burmese border. "That is why butts of MPS, MFA and Yunnan local government are sitting together (against the PLA)," said a PLA officer.¹¹⁹

The major differences the PLA has with MPS, MFA, and the Yunnan provincial government over the Kokang issue have led to a policy impasse, which has resulted in confusion and conflicting signals about China's attitude toward this issue.¹²⁰ On the one

hand, the MFA still enforces the policy of “four nos” with regard Kokang – no political recognition, no exchanges between (Sino-Kokang) governments/administrations, no military support, and no economic assistance.¹²¹ Thus, the PLA was not allowed to implement its proposal for “a sustainable resolution on Kokang,” which implies more active and comprehensive engagements and even some form of assistance to the Kokang rebel force. On the other hand, after the PLA bitterly complained that “local interests overwhelmed national interests,” the Central Government reclaimed control of China’s Burma policy-making process and, after the Kokang incident, took the leading coordination power away from the Yunnan provincial government.¹²²

When the three security-focused bureaucracies (PLA, MPS and MSS) speak with one voice on certain issues, it is rare for any opposing bureaucracy to continue to stand in their way. However, there is a constant element of competition in the relationship between these three bureaucracies, which contend for turf, resources, and attention from the top leaders. MPS has much more manpower, capability and resources than MSS, has a greater ability to enforce its preferences at each level, and has a much bigger budget and a higher political status.¹²³ This has led to an unbalanced distribution of power among the three, with the PLA and MSS finding most likely to form an alliance.

The antagonistic relationship between the PLA and MPS was evidenced in the handling of a tragic incident on the Mekong River, where in October 2011 13 crew members of a Chinese boat were found brutally tortured and killed. The Thai police’s investigation was stalled because the alleged culprits were Thai soldiers. In late October, China’s Defense Minister, General Liang Guanglie, in an interview to the Hong Kong-based *Phoenix Satellite TV*, expressed his impatience with the slow investigation and

stated that the military “could provide assistance” if needed, even though “the MPS is in charge of detailed actions.”¹²⁴ Liang’s statement was a rare public nudge, as well as an expression of the military’s interest in intervening in the MPS’s business. The MPS reacted by taking the unprecedented step of initiating and enforcing a joint regional patrol mechanism with Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos on the Mekong River, which represented the traditionally parochial MPS’s first step beyond China’s border.

Advantage of Strong Motivations

When the PLA and MFA have differences in policy positions they do not always cooperate, as they each have a separate mandate and responsibilities, and therefore inevitably have differences in interests and priorities. Bargaining between the PLA and other bureaucracies is best conceptualized as a repeated game, in the sense that there are separate negotiations on various issues but bargaining as a whole persists endlessly and takes into account previous iterations. Robert Axelrod writes, “What makes it possible for cooperation to emerge is the possibility that the players will meet again... Once the (two players) know that they will be dealing with each other indefinitely, the necessary preconditions for cooperation will exist... The foundation of cooperation is not really trust, but the durability of the relationship.”¹²⁵ The PLA and MFA have coexisted for more than six decades and there is every reason to believe that their coexistence will continue indefinitely. Despite differences in policy positions and bureaucratic hurdles, the two have reasons to yield on issues they know the other actor feels particularly strong about. Not every policy matter has the same implications for the two. In other words, they often place a different priority on the same issue. When one bureaucracy feels

particularly strong about a given issue, the other is likely to withhold its opposition if it does not see that particular issue as being a core value or high priority.

China's response to the U.S.-ROK joint military exercise in the Yellow Sea is one example of the MFA changing its stance and yielding to the PLA's position.¹²⁶ The MFA made the first statement on the joint exercise on June 8, 2010, urging "calmness and restraint from all parties concerned to avoid further escalation of tension," followed by a second, similar statement on June 22 calling on relevant parties to "stay calm."¹²⁷ However, the PLA's strong opposition to this exercise drove the MFA to shift its position. The MFA's initial position was based on the conclusion that part of the Yellow Sea is regarded as the high seas, and therefore the exercise was taking place in international waters. On July 1, Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff, told journalists that the PLA was "extremely opposed" to the U.S.-ROK naval exercises because they were "very close to Chinese territorial waters."¹²⁸ On July 6, when MFA spokesman Qin Gang was asked whether Ma's comments represented China's official position or his personal view, Qin didn't answer but said the MFA is "concerned," "has expressed its grave concern to relevant parties," and "will follow closely" the situation.¹²⁹ Two days later, Qin repeated Ma's firm opposition toward foreign military vessels or airplanes conducting activities in the Yellow Sea or seas close to China that impact China's security interests, thus signaling a revision of the MFA's position.¹³⁰

Ma Xiaotian's hardline comments on July 1 expressed the PLA's strong motivation to push its agenda.¹³¹ A senior PLA officer explained the reason why the PLA had such a particularly strong response to the joint military exercise: First, the PLA did not agree with the American and South Korean assessment regarding the *Cheonan*

incident. While a number of people believed that North Korea perpetrated the attack, others asserted that it was nearly impossible for North Korea to sink the *Cheonan* and get away with it, given that North Korea had noisy submarines that would easily be detected. Some in the PLA adopted a conspiracy theory: the U.S. full-scale intervention in Vietnam started after it asserted that North Vietnam sank an American warship, which was exposed decades later to be a gimmick done by Americans themselves.¹³² The PLA also found it suspicious that those who died on the *Cheonan* were soldiers, not officers. Therefore, this group believed it was possible that the U.S. or South Korea was behind the *Cheonan* Incident. Another group within the PLA believed that a low-ranking North Korean officer sank the *Cheonan* to retaliate against previous failures of North Korean operations, but the top leadership in Pyongyang did not approve this particular operation. One PLA officer summarized the PLA opposition to the U.S-South Korea joint exercise:

We didn't see convincing evidence so we demanded a full investigation. Russia conducted an independent investigation but South Korea refused to cooperate and disallowed the surviving officers on *Cheonan* to meet Russian investigators. Therefore, the PLA concluded that it was very likely done by North Korea, but the evidence was insufficient. With this conclusion on *Cheonan* Incident in the first place, the PLA could not accept a strong response from the U.S. and South Korea with military exercises, which they believed to blow out of proportion and would not help to ease the tension anyway. Moreover, the U.S. and South Korean militaries conducted their exercises too close to China's strategic heart, with Beijing within their shooting range. This made the military very nervous and resulted in their loud and strong oppositions.¹³³

By having Ma Xiaotian and a few other retired PLA officers argue publicly for the PLA's position, the PLA successfully influenced Chinese public opinion, which created pressure on the MFA. The MFA revised its initial position from one of emphasizing stability to one of opposing the exercise outright. A diplomat explained the revision of the MFA's position as its recognition of and desire to yield to the PLA's hardline position: "The PLA has stuck its head out and held such a (strong) position. If things escalate and problems arise, it is all on the head of the PLA, not us. That is why MFA did not go

against the PLA this time and revised its position.”¹³⁴ Civilian analysts acknowledged that the PLA’s strong opposition to the joint military exercises was problematic and wrong.¹³⁵

Advantage of Strong Netizen Opinions

Though cyber nationalism started to emerge in China as early as 1997 and became noticeable in 2003, netizens, or internet activists, have become the “most dynamic” new actor in China’s foreign policy-making, as Linda Jakobson concluded.¹³⁶ Individuals and groups with dedicated goals for social action create the majority of China’s nationalistic websites. Netizens have a distinctive purpose and the ability to harness the Internet to mobilize and organize large segments of Chinese society instantly and across multiple regions into social movements or protests. This is the main reason why netizens have become a new actor in China’s policy-making process. Netizens’ voices on China’s foreign policy receive disproportionate attention from the government because frustrations of large groups of netizens could be redirected to challenge the government and the Party’s legitimacy.¹³⁷ In other words, the Chinese government values and fears netizens’ opinions because their voices are “actionable.”¹³⁸ Although analysts differ over netizens’ level of influence, almost all agree that netizens constitute a new pressure group that the government can no longer ignore, especially when they form a near-unanimous opinion on a certain issue.¹³⁹

By 2008, China had overtaken the U.S. as the country with the largest number of Internet users. China’s Internet users reached 618 million in 2013, or roughly half of China’s population. The rise of the Internet in China has opened up public space, allowed

for anonymous political participation and a certain degree of free speech, spread knowledge and information, and has broken the monopoly of the government and elites in agenda-setting. This has significantly changed the way Chinese citizens interact with and exert pressure on policy-makers.¹⁴⁰ The anticipated response of netizens and their potential cyber-activism has increasingly become a factor that the Chinese government needs to take into account when deliberating various policies. Netizens have played a positive role in China's domestic politics and governance in the sense that they have created a public sphere and brought attention to the problem of corruption. Netizens' exposure of evidence of corruption on the Internet has opened cases that the formal disciplining and anti-corruption bureaucracies are either unwilling or unable to expose.

However, the Internet's role in China's foreign policy-making is more dubious and in general more negative, as it magnifies virulent nationalism, which puts pressure on the government and narrows its options. As Wang Xiaodong, one of the contributors to nationalist bestsellers *China Can Say No* and *Unhappy China*, correctly asserted, the "Internet is a powerful ally to China's nationalism."¹⁴¹ Netizens are generally more likely male,¹⁴² much younger,¹⁴³ less educated,¹⁴⁴ and more likely to be outside the labor market than the Chinese population as a whole.¹⁴⁵ As a result, the average Chinese netizen is attentive to politics, but also more prone to being irrational, radical, and nationalistic.¹⁴⁶ They are also likely to have more grievances and frustrations toward the government and have less to lose when involved in protests. Even with strict censorship and an effective firewall, the government cannot eliminate this threat and therefore tries to guide and channel it, and find an outlet for it. The government finds foreign policy a more conducive forum than domestic politics for releasing the netizens' pressure, since

the latter touches on issues that represent a greater threat to the Party's rule and legitimacy. Yet even on foreign and security policy, the government is reluctant to take into account the netizens' nationalistic viewpoints, since such strong sentiments, even in the form of patriotism, could be transformed into more fundamental and silent criticism toward the Party's governance.¹⁴⁷

The government disproportionately notices the netizens' voices because the government still places heavy constraints on public opinion polls on sensitive topics such as foreign and security policy and public confidence in the top leader. Moreover, netizens' voices, which are typically radical, spontaneous and instant, have a spillover effect on the media and public opinion in general. All Chinese media outlets are still regulated by the government and more or less adhere to the government's censorship. In comparison, netizens, with anonymity, can more freely speak their minds. Some publicize information that traditional media outlets do not want to publish because they fear political reprisals. Some netizens even become self-made freelancers on foreign affairs, whom even the traditional media follows to a certain extent. This has made information found on the Internet a more trusted news source in China than in the West.

The civilian foreign affairs system has adapted to the fact that netizens, whether one likes it or not, have become a new actor in China's foreign and security policy-making. Within its news office, the MFA established a public diplomacy section in 2004, which "downloads and collects public opinions online to brief MFA officials." Senior MFA officials, including Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, regularly attended live Internet chat room discussions to explain the MFA's policies. As Shen Guofang, then Assistant

Foreign Minister, acknowledged, “MFA would consider voices and views from the public when devising foreign policies or studying approaches to handle problems.”¹⁴⁸

It is hard to measure the overall magnitude and direction of influence netizens exert on China’s foreign and security policy-making, though in the past netizens have focused on Chinese citizens’ security. With regards to international disputes involving China, particularly Sino-Japanese disputes, their attitudes have tended to be “confrontational,” “radicalized,” “xenophobic,” and “war-mongering.”¹⁴⁹¹⁵⁰ In contrast, during international incidents where China is not a main actor, such as the Iraq War, netizens tend to be self-interested and even isolationists.¹⁵¹ As a result of netizens’ concerns, the MFA has had to adjust its overseas functions to put a much bigger emphasis on protecting and aiding Chinese citizens abroad. Public pressure modifies the MFA’s policies and behavior in other areas to a certain extent. Cases of netizens interacting with the MFA demonstrate the following three characteristics:

First, MFA responds more effectively to netizens’ grievances when netizens reach and ignite a broader audience; MFA chooses inaction when netizens’ voices are confined to the cyber sphere and haven’t influenced the mainstream media and non-netizen population. In July 2004, Zhao Yan, a businesswoman from Tianjin, was brutally beaten by Officer Robert Rhodes, a U.S. border guard. Photos of Zhao Yan’s badly beaten face went viral on the Internet and aroused such public anger in China that Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, in a rare move, called U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell to express his concern. The media and public approved of the MFA’s response.¹⁵² This contrasts with the case of Zhai Tiantian, a Chinese student studying in New Jersey, who was arrested in May 2010 on terrorism charges for threatening his professor and the school he

attended.¹⁵³ The MFA initially thought this case would be as inflammatory as Zhao Yan's and was ready to intervene. However, it didn't take any action, as this case did not arouse great attention from Chinese netizens. As a Washington-based Chinese diplomat explained: "When this student was arrested, we (in the Chinese Embassy) all got nervous and thought it would be another Zhao Yan Incident. We scrambled to lay out measures we could take. We were ready to intervene and exert diplomatic pressure. However, this incident never caused great attentions in the Internet as we first thought. It bubbled up for a few days and quieted down. So we decided not to act on it."¹⁵⁴

Second, the netizens' influence on China's foreign policy is unbalanced. Netizens are more influential in some policy areas than others, depending on how sustained netizens' attention is and how strongly they react. For example, in March 2004, when 16 Chinese reached the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands and seven of them were detained by Japanese police, the MFA initially kept a low profile and took a moderate position, which caused netizens to strongly criticize the MFA for its weakness. After two days, the MFA turned to a much more hardline position and urged Japan to release the Chinese detainees right away and unconditionally. Because of netizens' and the general public's sustained and strong resentment towards Japan, it has been difficult for the MFA to make major policy revisions on Japan, and some officials working on this area felt their policy had been "hijacked" by netizens.¹⁵⁵ The sustained pressure that netizens applied forced the MFA to address netizens' concerns and modify its proposed policies accordingly. Therefore, even though China did not alter its policies notably toward Japan after 2010, this does not mean that MFA felt less pressure from netizens.

Third, netizens' influence on the MFA is also reflected in the MFA's increasing self-censorship, which constrains its ability to promote its public diplomacy efforts. For example, the MFA published a statement on its website in November 2011 on China's donation of 23 school buses to Macedonia, which caused netizens to rebuke the MFA publicly. Before this donation, China had several high-publicity fatal school bus accidents. Public attention was aroused after a school bus crashed in Gansu Province, killing 22 (19 children), and a similar school bus accident in Jiangsu killed 15 children in 2011. In response to public outrage, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao publicized a regulation on school bus security management in 2012, promising to help local governments purchase secure school buses. The MFA's public diplomacy efforts clearly target an international audience, and are intended to express China's goodwill by providing foreign aid. However, a message intended for a foreign audience inevitably rebounds and reaches a domestic audience, as the Internet has no national boundaries. Once MFA's school bus donation was publicized on its website, Chinese netizens instantly posted virulent, politically charged critical comments such as: "why is the Chinese government always doing things that contradict the will of the Chinese people? In essence, it is because the Chinese people cannot be the master of their own nation!"; "If it is an indisputable historic fact that Chinese people's feelings are often hurt by western powers, this time the way those fools in the MFA hurt Chinese people's feelings is no less than the harms done by western powers."; "Is this treason?!"; "Since the Chinese government fulfills its responsibilities overseas, let the American hegemon take over the domestic governance of China!" The MFA soon deleted its statement on the school bus donation from its website.

Along the same lines, the PLA has increasingly felt pressured by netizens and conflicted by the conundrum that messages intended for a foreign audience cannot in practice be differentiated from messages intended for a domestic audience. Lieutenant General Qi Jianguo, Deputy Chief of General Staff, a well-respected combat-oriented senior PLA officer, delivered a moderate and level-headed speech at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in 2013, which was positively received by the largely Western audience.¹⁵⁶ Qi went to great lengths during his speech to assuage the “China Threat Theory” and provide answers to the six challenging questions.¹⁵⁷ However, Qi’s moderate stance and reassuring message, which was intended for a foreign audience, triggered a strong backlash from netizens. Qi’s comment on leaving the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Island dispute for future generations to solve (in fact reiterating Deng Xiaoping’s formula) was fodder for netizens, who commented, “Why do we need the PLA now if the dispute is to be left for future generations?” Some netizens even labeled Qi’s comment as the words of “a traitor” and some asserted that he was “mentally-retarded.”¹⁵⁸ Qi was extremely frustrated by this experience. At the 2014 Shangri-La Dialogue, his successor, Wang Guanzhong, took Qi’s lesson to heart. Wang, despite military analysts’ advice, delivered a particularly aggressive speech that he wrote himself, which is highly unusual in such circumstances.¹⁵⁹ Even more troubling, the GSD’s leadership complimented Wang on his speech due to Chinese netizens’ approval of Wang’s performance. Senior PLA officers have adjusted to this new reality by displaying an increased reluctance to attend on-the-record bilateral meetings and multilateral conferences, which is a worrying trend for China’s military diplomacy. “We are treading on thin ice, as it is impossible to please two masters with opposing viewpoints at the same time,” a senior PLA FAO officer

complained.¹⁶⁰ If a PLA officer tries to assure foreign countries and the international community, he will be chastised by Chinese netizens, which may even hurt his career; if a PLA officer tries to cater to Chinese netizens, his positions will only add fuel to the fire and strain the PLA's relations with other countries.

The MFA and the PLA are not the only actors sensitive to netizens' opinions. Top leaders can be influenced by the netizens' positions as well. After the Obama administration approved an arms sale package to Taiwan worth more than \$6 billion in 2010, which included 114 Patriot missiles, 60 Black Hawk helicopters, and communications equipment for Taiwan's F-16 fleet, China reacted by cutting off military ties with the U.S. and launching a new initiative of imposing sanctions on U.S. companies that sell weapons to Taiwan. Five months later, Hu Jintao met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, following the conclusion of the second round of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED). The MFA had been assuring the State Department that despite China's strong reaction toward the U.S. arms sales, U.S. Secretary of Defense Bob Gates would still be invited to visit China as planned. When he received previous reports, Hu had never expressed any support or opposition to Gates' planned visit. Therefore, MFA wrote in the talking points prepared for Hu that he should invite Gates to visit China when meeting with Clinton. However, Hu did not raise the issue at all. The MFA then understood that the public's strong reaction to the arms sales bolstered the PLA's hardline position and influenced Hu's thinking. The MFA did not pursue this issue further.¹⁶¹

When the military and MFA stand on opposing sides of an issue, the military's hardline position could be more compelling when strong netizen support is foreseen or present, as exemplified by China's response to the U.S.-ROK joint naval exercise in 2010 discussed above. In such cases, the MFA is at a strong disadvantage because it suffers from an image problem in that netizens view it as being "weak" and "defeatists." By contrast, given the PLA's reputation for being tough and defending China's national interests, it has more room to negotiate and has the ability to make concessions. However, when the two switch sides, with the MFA taking the hardline position and the PLA being more cautious and restrained, the PLA will be under less pressure from netizens and have more room to maneuver. Thus, when the military takes a moderate position and the MFA takes a more hardline stance, the military could be less susceptible to the netizens' pressure than if it takes a hardline position and the MFA takes a moderate one.

As an example of the above point, Chinese media started to float the argument in early 2013 that Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands-Okinawa is disputable. Some in the MFA supported the spread of this argument, as it believed that Japan was stubbornly refusing to negotiate over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. This position was first articulated in a highly publicized article in *People's Daily* written by two academics that questioned Japan's ownership of the Ryukyu Islands, and then in MFA spokeswoman Hua Chunying's sympathetic comment.¹⁶² *Global Times* then advocated launching a "three-step campaign" to "reignite the debate about Ryukyu Islands' ownership" and reverse China's past diplomatic stance on the Ryukyu-Okinawa issue.¹⁶³ As a result, in May 2012 *People's Daily*, *Global Times*, *CCTV*, *World Affairs* (one of the MFA's publications), and Hong Kong-based but pro-China *Wenweipo* published a series of

articles advancing the argument that Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands-Okinawa was disputable.¹⁶⁴ Netizens soon picked up this argument, which first emerged in 2005,¹⁶⁵ and endorsed it through Internet chat rooms such as *Xici hutong*, *Xinhua fazhan luntan* (Xinhua Development Forum), *zhonghua luntan* (China Forum), and *renmin luntan* (People's Forum).¹⁶⁶ Despite retired Major General Luo Yuan strongly lobbying for the PLA to adopt this position, the PLA¹⁶⁷ as an institution resisted this argument on two grounds. First, as the U.S. has a large military base located on Okinawa, raising this idea would certainly bring the U.S. deeper into the East China Sea dispute, which the PLA was trying to avoid. Second, the PLA does not yet have the means to mount any military operation over this area. In June 2012, Qi Jianguo, Deputy Chief of General Staff, clarified in Chinese media that the status of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is "essentially different" from that of Okinawa, which showed the PLA's realism and its ability to resist the netizens' pressure.¹⁶⁸

It would be a mistake to believe that netizens currently make China's foreign and security policy. Many Chinese scholars agree with the conclusion of Wang Yizhou, a professor at Peking University, that "China's foreign policy-making is strictly controlled by political procedures," and "the society could at best play a marginal role."¹⁶⁹ However, there is also a consensus among Chinese analysts that the government and top leaders self-censor and modify their policies to some extent based on an assessment of the netizens' predicted response and any demonstrated netizen response.¹⁷⁰ The Chinese government invariably pays great attention to its domestic audience, especially those who are vocal and can act on their views, precisely because as a non-democratic polity it has less legitimacy.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how the PLA interacts with the civilian foreign affairs system, namely the MFA, a main if not the leading actor in China's foreign and security policy process. During a state of normalcy, in which routine and non-contingency procedures dominate, the civilian foreign policy establishment follows a consensus-based decision-making model, as well as a bureaucratic and cumbersome reporting procedure. Since the 1990s, the MFA's political standing relative to the PLA has been in continual decline. The PLA's political space declined in the early 1980s, as explained by the previous chapter. The decline of the MFA's political standing over the past two decades, however, is much starker than that of the PLA in the early 1980s. This dynamic has changed how the PLA and MFA interact in the policy process, which is critical given that the policy priorities and positions of these organizations have diverged significantly since the time before Deng's reign. The PLA and MFA have numerous formal platforms to interact with each other, yet in practice the PLA and MFA are less connected than ever before. A new National Security Commission was created in late 2013, partly to strengthen the coordination of bureaucracies, though it will take years to establish the effectiveness of this organization. The way that the MFA and PLA interact is similar to how the State Department and Department of Defense interact in the U.S. In both China and the U.S., the military has an edge over the civilian foreign affairs system during a pressing security threat, and powerful allies help one's case while potent enemies undermine one's case. Other rules may be unique to China: a bureaucracy with particularly strong motivation can thwart other bureaucracies, which can change the policy outcome. Additionally, strong netizens' opinions, though not necessarily

representative of public opinion more generally, undermine the MFA more than the PLA, though both are influenced to some extent by strong netizen opinions.

¹ Existing leading small groups and their executive offices are still kept while the new NSC has taken over their initiatives and controls. The reason to keep these small groups still standing is to reduce the unnecessary oppositions from those either working in these offices and those who put their people in these offices, according to a senior official the author interviewed. This is a lesson learned from Zhao Ziyang's administrative reform (1986-1989). With Zhao's administrative reform, the Political and Legal Commission was abolished in 1988, which caused strong backlashes and resistance against the overall administrative reform Zhao led. Every bureaucracy carries a group of working staff and officials who are put in because of their close relationship with by those, often retired but still wielding certain power and influence. Even if a new organization is established and old ones have lost their relevance and utility, it would create oppositions from this group of people and their patrons. Therefore, it is likely that leading small groups would be kept

² Bo Yibo, *Recollections of Certain Major Decisions and Events*, CCP Central Party Press, 1997.

³ This principle was written as Article 28 of "Sixty Articles for Working Style (Draft) (*gongzuo fangfa liushitiao (cao'an)*)" devised in February 1958. The original Chinese words are "*daquan dulan, xiaoquan fensan, dangwei jue ding, gefang quban*".

⁴ In February 1958, the position of Foreign Minister was taken away from Premier Zhou Enlai and transferred to Chen Yi. In the second plenary meeting of CCP 8th National Congress in May, Mao gave a speech and urged to prevent separatism. Zhou then proposed to the Party Center or the CCPCC to reconsider whether he was suitable to stay on the position of Premier. In the following meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee, all members asked Zhou to rescind the resignation except Mao. Mao did not ask Zhou to stay. Neither Mao ask Zhou not to stay. As a result, Zhou's power was greatly undermined. By the time China started the Great Leap Forward, Zhou no longer had any say in economic policies. See Bo Yibo, "Zhou Enlai twice lost power and confronted Mao once", *CCP News Net*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/67507/7710329.html>.

⁵ Bo Yibo, *Recollections of Certain Major Decisions and Events*.

⁶ This section benefited greatly from Chong-Hai Shaw's insightful paper on leading small groups. See Chong-Hai Shaw, "The CLSG: Its Definition and Status in The CCP" (*zhonggong zhongyang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu de zuzhi dingwei*), <http://niis.cass.cn/upload/2012/11/d20121129201413665.pdf>.

⁷ Chih-Chia Hsu, *Study of CCP Foreign Policy Decision-making Models* (Taipei: shuiniu chubanshe, 2001), p. 138.

⁸ Deng Xiaoping, "Reform of the Party and State Leadership Institutions," in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume II, p. 321.

⁹ Secretariat's power was stripped in 1987 because of the downfall of then Secretary General Hu Yaobang, who relied on Secretariat to execute his decisions.

¹⁰ The status of CCPCC Secretariat was downgraded in the revised Party Constitution in 1987 to "executive organ" (*banshi jigou*), from "the organ that handles daily work of the Party Center", as prescribed in the Party Constitution in 1982.

¹¹ In Chinese, *waishi guikou guanli zhidu*.

¹² *CCP Organizational History Archives*, vol. 5 (Beijing: zhonggongdangshi chubanshe, 2000), pp. 41-43.

¹³ *CCP Organizational History Archives*, vol. 9, p. 628.

¹⁴ In Chinese, *changshe jigou*.

¹⁵ In Chinese, *yishi he xietiao*.

¹⁶ Functions of FALSG were decided in the first meeting in February 1981. FALSG under Li Xiannian had members including Zhao Ziyang (Premier), Wan Li (Vice Premier, agriculture), Gu Mu (State Councilor, exports and imports), Chen Muhua (State Councilor, foreign trade), Ji Pengfei (State Councilor, Hong Kong and Macao affairs), Liao Chengzhi (NPC), Huang Hua (FM till 1982), Wu Xiuquan (military intelligence chief till 1978), Huang Zhen (culture) and Zhu Muzhi (propaganda). Luo Qingchang (state security, Taiwan affairs), Wang Bingnan (public diplomacy), and Li Yimang (Party discipline, formerly ID) attended the regular meetings but were not members of this body. In 1983, FALSG reshuffled its members,

with Li Xiannian still the head and Zhao Ziyang, Wan Li and Ji Pengfei as the Deputies. FALSG members changed to Wu Xueqian (Foreign Minister), Gu Mu, Chen Muhua, Qiao Shi (ID), Geng Biao (Defense Minister till 1983), Wu Xiuquan, Qian Liren (formerly ID, Editor in Chief of People's Daily), Zhu Muzhi, Xu Xin (military intelligence), and Chen Chu (State Council, Secretary General of FALSG). Huang Hua, Li Yimang, Wang Bingnan and Huan Xiang (foreign affairs research branch of State Council) attended the meetings regularly but were not members of this group. Depending on the subject of each meetings, officials in charge of various agencies might be invited to attend the FALSG meetings. See Cheng Zhensheng, "Li Xiannian and Foreign Affairs in Initial Stage of Economic Reform and Opening-up," *zhonggong dangshi yanjiu*, Issue 6 of 2009, <http://www.hprc.org.cn/pdf/ZGDS200906019.pdf>; *Orbituary of Chen Chu*, Xinhua News Agency, 1996.

¹⁷ In Chinese, *quanti huiyi*.

¹⁸ In Chinese, *bangong huiyi*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Li Peng, "In memory of Comrade Deng Xiaoping", *qiushi zazhi*, Issue 16, 2004,

<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-08-19/14233438322s.shtml>.

²¹ Cheng Hong, "Wu Xueqian: Introduction of Previous Leaders of CASS",

<http://iwaas.cass.cn/bsgk/lld/2011-03-02/2175.shtml>

²² FALSG generally includes members of the following agencies: Vice Premier in charge of foreign affairs or the State Counselor on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of foreign affairs, Minister of Commerce, Minister of Public Security, Minister of State Security, Director of Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, Director of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Director of Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, Director of State Council News Office, Ministry of Propaganda, the International Department.

²³ There were different accounts about when exactly Jiang took over FALSG from Li Peng. Lampton indicated that Jiang did not take it over till March 1998. See Lampton, *Same Bed*, pp. 293. Zhong Feiteng pointed out that Jiang already took reins over in 1996.

²⁴ In 1983, Xu Xin, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of military intelligence and military diplomacy, became a member of the FALSG. Additionally, Wu Xiuquan, Xu Xin's predecessor, and Geng Biao, the former Defense Minister, also joined the FALSG. Qin Jiwei, then Defense Minister, was added onto the FALSG, marking the first time that a defense minister served on this body. From then on, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of military intelligence and diplomacy would sit on the FALSG, which included Generals Xu Huizi and Xiong Guangkai.

²⁵ Interview with an official who previously played a liaison between MFA and FALSG, Beijing, 2013.

²⁶ Interview with a diplomat with MFA who in the past acted as MFA's liaison with FALSG, Jilin, 2012.

²⁷ Interview with a senior diplomat who had long and extensive experiences in MFA's Asia policy team, Beijing, summer of 2013.

²⁸ Ma Baofeng, "Deng Xiaoping's Strategic Concerns in Foreign Affairs: Only Hand-shaking But No Embracing," *People's Daily Overseas Edition*, January 1, 2011,

http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2011-01/01/content_713589.htm.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ma Baofeng, "Recording Gorbachev's visit to China", *Bainianchao* (100-year Wave), August 6, 2013, http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsyj/wjs/xzgwj/201311/t20131112_253309.html.

³¹ The recommendation was made by a group of PLA analysts headed by Zhang Tuosheng, Director of Research at China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (CIFIS). Interview with an expert at CIFIS, Beijing, summer of 2012.

³² Interview with a person working with a PLA-affiliated organization, Beijing, summer of 2012.

³³ In Chinese, it is *zhongyang haiyang quanyi gongzuo lingdao xiaozu*, or briefly *zhongyang haiquanban*.

³⁴ Interview with a professor who conducted consultative projects for State Oceanic Agency, Guangdong, January 2013.

³⁵ Alice Miller, "How Strong Is Xi Jinping?", *China Leadership Monitor* no. 43 (March 2014),

<http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM43AM-2.pdf>.

³⁶ The Central Leading Group for the Comprehensive Deepening of Reform, mandated by the CCPCC "Decision" to last till 2020, will have at least six subgroups, one for each major policy sector treated in the

plenum decision: economy and environment; political and legal reform; cultural system reform; social reform and management; party-building; and reform of the party discipline inspection system.

³⁷ Besides amassing power under his personal throne, as Xi Jinping hollows up both power from Party organizations such as the Central Political and Legal Commission and overrides the State Council, he is reversing the decade-long process of Deng Xiaoping's reform in the 1980s which aims at separating the Party from the State. Yang Guangbin, professor of Renmin University, pointed out that the establishment of the NSC is a "power transfer, i.e., the tasks which used to be left to the State Council are directly decided and implemented by the Party Center." Yang believed that it is still too early to make a judgment whether it is a progress or a degeneration at this stage. The reason is that previous division of power is administrative rather than market-oriented. Therefore, government ministries and local governments obtained more resources and more power after those reforms promoting divisions of power, which resulted in the consolidation of special interest groups. Only more powerful organizations could tear apart those special interest groups. From this angle, Yang believed that more concentration of power serves the purpose of dividing and restricting power in a more just way. "If such a power transfer eventually benefits division of power and autonomy, such as...promoting the autonomy of social organizations...and allow the market to play a determinant role in resource allocation, which would better constrain or push back the government's power periphery, and restricting local government more effectively, then such a power transfer will eventually be positive." See Yang Guangbin, "Political Reform List and Trend in 2014," *renmin luntan*, issue 5 of 2014, http://paper.people.com.cn/rmlt/html/2014-02/20/content_1392802.htm.

³⁸ "Xi Jinping Became Chairman of Central State Security Commission," *Xinhua News Agency*, January 24, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-01/24/c_119122483.htm.

³⁹ Li Yan, "NSC Would Enhance the Initiative and Creativity of Those Safeguarding Security," *China National Radio Station*, November 18, 2013,

http://mil.cnr.cn/mjzl/jynzl/zjgd/201311/t20131118_514162362_2.html.

⁴⁰ Huang Shan and Tang Jiajie, "Chinese Version of the National Security Council," *Caixin New Century magazine*, November 18, 2013, <http://magazine.caixin.com/2013-11-15/100605700.html>; Jiang Luming and Wang Wenhua, "Origin and Mission of the National Security Commission," *xuexi shibao* (Study Times), April 18, 2014, http://www.chinareform.org.cn/gov/system/Practice/201404/t20140408_193799.htm; You Zhibin, "Crisis Management After The Establishment of National Security Commission," *xuexi shibao*, December 23, 2013, <http://www.bjyj.gov.cn/llyj/t1144792.html>; Han Na, Zou Le and Zhang Lu, "Establishment of NSC To Eliminate Disturbances of Interest Groups to China's Foreign Policies," *Beijing Morning Post*, November 13, 2013,

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http://www.chinareform.org.cn/gov/governance/Practice/201311/t20131114_180332.htm; "Five Significant Meanings of the Establishment of NSC," *website of People's Daily*,

http://www.chinareform.org.cn/gov/system/Practice/201311/t20131113_180251.htm; Chu Xinyan and Yan Xinyu, "NSC Would Enhance Efficiency of China's Policy-making," *xin jing bao*, November 13, 2013,

http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2013-11/13/content_477681.htm?div=-1; Li Yan, "NSC Would Enhance the Initiative and Creativity of Those Safeguarding Security," *China National Radio Station*, November 18, 2013,

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Five Fingers Shaping A Fist," *People's Daily Overseas Version*, November 13, 2013,

http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2013-11/13/content_1324033.htm; Yu Dong, "NSC, China's Top-level (Decision-making) Design," February 20, 2014, <http://www.infzm.com/content/98229>; Chen

Xiangyang, "Three 'Needs' For Establishing NSC," *zhongguo guofangbao* (China's Defense News), November 19, 2013.

⁴¹ Interviews with multiple sources, Beijing, 2010-2013.

⁴² Li Jingtao and Zhang Yigeng, "NSC sets China in peace and stability", *huan qiu ren wu* (Global Personality), November 15, 2013, http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/guofangbao/content-3/detail_2013_November15/31294993_0.shtml.

⁴³ Interview with a senior security expert, Beijing, summer of 2012.

⁴⁴ Only Minister of Public Security under Zhou Yongkang's tenure was a Politburo member. Zhou held such an important seat because of his close relationship with Jiang Zemin as well as his political "utility" of subordinating China's policing system completely to Jiang's control. Zhou was recommended to Jiang by Wang Daohan through the introduction of Wang Jing, Wang Daohan's daughter. Zhou's predecessors and successors never held a seat at the Politburo. Interview with a contact of Ministry of Public Security, Beijing, 2014.

⁴⁵ Interview with a senior official at MFA, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁴⁶ David M. Lampton, "Xi Jinping and the National Security Commission: Policy Coordination and Political Power" (pre-publication draft), *Journal of Contemporary China*--the hard copy version is tentatively scheduled for: Vol. 24, No. 95 (September 2015).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Interviews with various officials and PLA officers with knowledge of the setting-up of the NSC, Beijing, 2014.

⁴⁹ NSC allegedly included Li Zhanshu, director of GO, as the Executive Director and Meng Jianzhu, secretary of Central Politics and Law Commission as the Standing Commissioner. Zhang Chunxian, Party Secretary of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, is allegedly a member of NSC.

⁵⁰ Chinese Central Television aired the scenes of the first meetings of the other two super organization, which provided a glance of the personnel make-up to outsiders. However, when NSC had the first meeting, CCTV had publicized a piece of news in words, but no photos or videos of the meeting. See Cai Rupeng, "NSC Starts Sailing," *zhongguo xinwen zhouban* (Chinese Newsweek), April 29, 2014.

⁵¹ This resolution is entitled as Decision of the CCCPC on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform, passed by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on 12 November 2013. See "Xi Jinping Made An Important Speech in Third Plenum of the CCP's 18th Congress Held in Beijing," *People's Daily*, November 13, 2013, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/1113/c64094-23521588.html>; Decision of the CCCPC on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform (Full Text), *China.org.cn*, January 17, 2014, http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/2014-01/17/content_31226494.htm.

⁵² "CCPCC Politburo Determined on Set-up of Central National Security Commission," *Xinhua News Agency*, January 24, 2014, http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2014-01/24/content_2575011.htm.

⁵³ See Ma Ling, "Speaking From the Name of 'Central National Security Commission,'" *the website of aisixiang*, February 14, 2014, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/zgyj/ggzhc/article_20140213100482.html; Ma Ling, "Comparison of NSC With the Supreme State Conference In the 1950s," *Journal of Yunnan University* (Law Edition), issue 1 of 2014, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/71836.html>.

⁵⁴ Liu Yunshan also oversees education, besides propaganda and ideology.

⁵⁵ In mid 2013, the differences between Xi and Liu were visible in public spheres through the debate over the importance of Chinese Constitution. Xi publicly advocated "rule by Constitution or Constitutionalism" in December 2012. Chinese media controlled by Department of Propaganda and Liu Yunshan launched fierce and serial attacks the so-called Constitutionalism. The current Chinese Constitution, adopted in 1982, enshrines "freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration" and "freedom of religious belief". It has become the Chinese reformist and liberals' sounding board to emphasize the importance and full implementation of the Chinese Constitution which Xi resonated in his speech in the 30th anniversary for the publishing of the Chinese Constitution. Xi stated in that speech that Constitution is the "supreme law" that "no organization or individual has the privilege to overstep" and that "power must be made responsible and must be supervised," and China "must ensure that the power bestowed by the people is constantly used for the interests of the people." He further emphasized that "rule of Law (in China) is primary about ruling the state according to Constitution" and "the Party must act under the requirements of the Constitution and law." Xi's speech illustrated that the core of his ideal of Chinese Dream is, at least by words, rule by Constitution. After Xi's speech, the counter-attacks led by the conservative camp centered their criticism against "rule by Constitution," starting with Yang Xiaoqing in the hallmark platform of the conservative camp, *hong qi* (Red Flag) magazine in May 2013 and Wang Tingyou a month later. Yang, quoting words of Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, bombarded the idea of "Chinese Dream is a dream for rule by Constitution" and criticized the "rule by Constitution" reflected "power politics and the discourse of vocal hegemony" (*qiangquan zhengzhi he yanyu baquan*).

Zheng Zhixue, an unknown scholar using pen name, published in May 2013 in *Dang Jian*, a magazine directly under the Propaganda Department, warning that those who advocate “rule by Constitution have a clear purpose of overthrowing the leadership of the Communist Party in China and subverting the socialist regime.” As Liu Yunshan is the PBSC member overseeing ideology and propaganda, all evidences show that he stands behind all these attacks against Xi’s proposal on rule by Constitution. Liu has been forcing Xi to show his hand in terms of ideology, which will open him up to attacks from either China’s liberals or conservatives. Du Daozheng, the former chief of the General Administration of Press and Publications, believed the Southern Weekend Incident indicated the differences between Xi Jinping and Liu Yunshan. The theme of Xi’s speeches always focuses on governance by law and governance in the interest of people. In his speech at the all-China propaganda chiefs conferences in January 2013, Liu Yunshan advocated “consolidating and expanding the positive, healthy and uplifting mainstream (Communist) thinking,” “establishing political consciousness,” and “holding correct, distinctive and firm views regarding the Party’s basic political line and major principles.” “What (Liu) emphasized runs counter to what Xi did,” said Du Daozheng. See “Constitution of the PRC” (Full Text and Amendment in English), December 4, 1982, *People’s Daily*, <http://en.people.cn/constitution/constitution.html>; “Xi Jinping’s Speech (Full Text) in Commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Implementation of the Current Constitution,” *People’s Daily*, December 5, 2012, http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/xinzheng/detail_2012_12/05/19838967_0.shtml?_from_ralated; Zhao Yanan, “Uphold Constitution, Xi Says,” *China Daily*, December 5, 2012, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-12/05/content_15985894.htm; Yang Xiaoqing, “A comparative study of People’s democratic system and Rule by Constitution,” *hongqi wengao* (Red Flag), issue 10 of 2013, http://www.qstheory.cn/hqwg/2013/201310/201305/t20130521_232618.htm; Zheng Zhixue, “Understanding the Nature of Rule by Constitution,” *dang jian* (Party Building), issue 6 of 2013, pp. 29-31, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/0529/c83855-21652535-2.html>; “Yanhuang and Southern Weekend Incidents Traced Back to Liu Yunshan and Li Changchun,” *World Journal*, January 7, 2013, <http://www.wenxuecity.com/news/2013/01/07/2163323.html>.

⁵⁶ “Xi Jinping Held a Special Politburo Meeting and Gave An Important Speech,” *Xinhua News Agency*, June 25, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-06/25/c_116286091.htm.

⁵⁷ Previous 1st ranking Vice Premier had at least one of the three portfolios: banking, foreign trade and agriculture. Zhang Gaoli was assigned to assist Premier Li Keqiang as the 1st ranking Vice Premier, but banking, industry, and transportation was assigned to Ma Kai while agriculture and foreign trade was assigned to Wang Yang.

⁵⁸ Zhang’s position at NSC, mostly likely due to a political compromise, was problematic in China’s political practice because of his main position as the country’s top legislator. See Ma Ling, “Comparison of NSC With the Supreme State Conference In the 1950s,” *Journal of Yunnan University*(Law Edition), issue 1 of 2014, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/71836.html>.

⁵⁹ Xi Jinping’s father, Xi Zhongxun, was stripped off Vice Premier and put in prison for almost eight years during political purges by Mao. Xi’s father, at one point, had to pretend insanity, putting his own manure on his face and prison walls, in order to escape cruel treatment, based on an interview the author conducted. Xi Jinping at age of 15 was a victim of repeated arbitrary detentions in 1968, implicated by his father Xi Zhongxun. Xi was among 70 children of former senior cadres imprisoned, which included Liu Yuan (Liu Shaoqi’s son), Bo Xilai (Bo Yibo’s son), Ye Xuanping (Ye Jianying’s son), Zou Jiahua (Ye Jianying’s son-in-law), He Pengfei (He Long’s son). About 70% of the detained were teenagers under age of 20, with the youngest only 14. The longest detained included Bo Xilai (1968-1972). Those detained in this so-called “Study Group of Cadres’ Children”, documented in Lu De’s book *Camp 789* and a quoted internally released book “Chronicle of Beijing Public Security Bureau (1948-1985)”, were “starved”, “physically and mentally abused”, forced to heavy labors and “instigated into physically fighting each other”. Xi’s younger brother, Xi Yuanping, described Xi in 1968 as “physically extremely weak and full of lice”. Xi personally abhorred the institution of the so-called re-education system through labor, a beautified term for forced labor camp and arbitrary detention without legal trials as forced labor camp was administrative measures, instead of legal actions. Interview with a retired GPD officer, 2013. Also See Benjamin Kang Lim and Ben Blanchard, “Failure to End China’s Labor Camps Shows Limits of Xi’s Power,” *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/06/us-china-politics-xi-insight-idUSBRE9A514U20131106>; “Xi Yuanping Remembers Father Xi Zhongxun,” *China Youth Daily*, October 11, 2013,

<http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2013/10-11/5362645.shtml>; Dongfang Ping, "The Whole Story about Beijing juvenile Detention Classes," <http://blog.sciencenet.cn/blog-279293-807772.html>; Office of Public Security History, *Chronicle of Beijing Public Security Bureau (1948-1985)*, internal publication, unknown publication date; Xiao Han and Mia Turner, *Camp 789* (New York: Mirror Books, 1998).

⁶⁰ An unconfirmed article at Qian Shao magazine reported on the differences between Xi and Zhang as well as Xi's harsh criticism of Zhang in a Politburo meeting in October 2014. See "Xi Criticizes, Zhang Kept Silence," *qian shao magazine*, Issue 1 of 2015, <http://frontline.sandhk.com/?p=1200>.

⁶¹ The websites of Xinhua News Agency, Chinese Central TV and People's Daily all reported on Meng's speech on 7 January 2013 which were deleted the next day. See Shen Yuan, "Laogai System Must Be Rooted Out," *kaifang zazhi*, March 10, 2013, <http://www.open.com.hk/content.php?id=1207#.VPdcQvnF-JU>; Chen Baocheng, "Future of Laogai Clarified: Reform Replacing Abolishing," *Caixin News*, February 17, 2012.

⁶² This "decision" dictates candidates for the Hong Kong's Chief Executive election can only be selected by a nominating committee, which will be modeled on the old election committee. Consequently, candidate selection will be in the hands mainly of people who are sympathetic to Beijing. Moreover, over half of the members of the nominating committee would have to approve each candidate, which means that no pan-democrat could get nominated if Beijing disapproved of him or her. See Richard C. Bush III, "China's Decision on Universal Suffrage in Hong Kong," September 2, 2014, *Brookings Institution website*, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/09/02-hong-kong-chief-executive-election-bush>.

⁶³ Xi did not make such a reference in the opening remarks of the meeting, which was open to media. Leung later said that Xi expressed approval of his administration's recent performance in the closed-door meeting later. See Peter So, Kwong Man-ki and Jeffie Lam, "Xi Jinping Pledges Support for Hong Kong's Efforts to Safeguard Rule of Law," *South China Morning Post*, November 9, 2014.

⁶⁴ Lu Gang, "National Security Commission drives reforms in China's foreign policy system", *she hui guan cha*, Issue 12 of 2003, <http://www.faobserver.com/NewsInfo.aspx?id=9791>.

⁶⁵ Liu, Xiaohong, *Chinese Ambassadors: The Rise of Diplomatic Professionalism since 1949* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 13.

⁶⁶ Meng Lanying, "Marching-out of the first generation of Generals Ambassadors of New China", *dang shi wen yuan*, Issue of December 2009, <http://www.globalview.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=21184>.

⁶⁷ Liu Xiaohong, *Chinese Ambassadors*, pp. 161-62.

⁶⁸ Wang Boyong, New China's Foreign Policy Decision-making Mechanism and Its Evolution, June 2000, http://www.wangboyong.com/boyong_publicationscn.htm.

⁶⁹ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

⁷⁰ Interview with an official who had experience working on US-China relations, Beijing, 2012.

⁷¹ Interview with a senior diplomat with MFA, Beijing, summer of 2013.

⁷² Chen Xiaoru, "Evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya with high efficiency", *China Youth Daily*, March 11, 2011, http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2011-03/11/nw.D110000zgqnb_20110311_1-07.htm.

⁷³ The report chain of this office is a senior colonel who leads this office, through a Deputy Director of the Operations Department of the PLA General Staff, to the Chief of General Staff and then the CMC Vice Chairmen.

⁷⁴ Chen Zhuqin, "What China could do when the airplane was missing?", *gong shi wang*, March 10, 2014, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/qqsww/qgqc/article_20140310102083.html.

⁷⁵ Shi Hongtao, "China Would Establish Five Mechanism To Ensure Citizens' Safety Overseas," *People's Daily*, December 28, 2005, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/3979842.html>.

⁷⁶ In the Kyrgyzstan riot, China sent nine airplanes to evacuate 1321 Chinese citizens. See Oliver Bräuner, "Protecting Chinese nationals in Kyrgyzstan: the 2010 evacuation operation," *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly), issue 2 of 2013, pp. 30-5.

⁷⁷ Terril Yue Jones, "U.S., China agree to work together on cyber security," *Reuters*, April 13, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/13/us-china-us-cyber-idUSBRE93C05T20130413>; Ge Qian, "MFA set up Cyber Affairs Office", *Nanfang dushibao* (Southern Urban News), June 15, 2013, <http://it.sohu.com/20130615/n378899939.shtml>.

⁷⁸ Interview with Bonnie Glaser, Washington DC, February 2014.

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- ⁷⁹ Bonnie Glaser and Brittany Billingsley, "Friction and Cooperation Co-exist Uneasily", *Comparative Connections*, September 2011.
- ⁸⁰ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Office of the Spokesman, May 10, 2011, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/05/20110510170838su0.9190136.html#ixzz35f8Jt7H4> http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/05/20110510170838su0.9190136.html#a_xzz35f700Dbm.
- ⁸¹ Shirley A. Kan, "U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress", November 20, 2013, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32496.pdf>, p. 6.
- ⁸² Interview with two senior active-duty PLA officers close to the PLA GSD FAO, Beijing, 2012 and 13.
- ⁸³ Interview with a senior official who formerly worked for Department of Asian Affairs, Beijing, January 2013.
- ⁸⁴ Interview with an official with PLA GSD FAO, Beijing, summer of 2011.
- ⁸⁵ Interviews with multiple officials at MFA, 2011-2014.
- ⁸⁶ As an example, the PLA had distinctively different policy prescriptions for China's negotiation with Vietnam in 1990s. The PLA insisted on reaching a package deal with Vietnam on both land and territorial waters while MFA insisted on treating land negotiation separate from negotiation on the territorial waters and maritime rights.
- ⁸⁷ Interview with a PLA officer at PLA GSD Foreign Affairs Office, Beijing, 2012.
- ⁸⁸ Interview with a PLA officer involved in training and education, Beijing, November 2013.
- ⁸⁹ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.
- ⁹⁰ One PLA officer complains about the frequent rotation of his MFA interlocutor. When it comes to relatively more technical issues, the lack of knowledge and experience of the MFA interlocutor leads to errors in judgment which this PLA officer believes is justified to be opposed. The frequent rotation of MFA staff also leads to the PLA interlocutor's reluctance to make real efforts building a good working relationship as "before I could recognize (my MFA interlocutor's) face, he is gone on an overseas mission", according to this PLA officer. Interview with an active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.
- ⁹¹ Interview with an anonymous official at the Foreign Ministry, January 27, 2013.
- ⁹² Interview with a Chinese diplomat who was involved in the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya, Beijing, 2012.
- ⁹³ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, August 2012.
- ⁹⁴ Derek S. Reveron and Michele D. Gavin, "America's Viceroy's", in *America's Viceroy's: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, edited by Derek S. Reveron (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 5.
- ⁹⁵ Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the world wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 59-60.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ This was evidenced by Admiral Liu Huaqing and General Zhang Wannian's accounts of the Sino-British negotiation over the transfer of Hong Kong, the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and the 2001 EP-3 Incident. See Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian's Biography*; and Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*.
- ⁹⁹ Interview with Li Jun from the TV documentary entitled "Stand-off Stories on the Sino-Indian Border", Phoenix Satellite TV, May 16, 2013.
- ¹⁰⁰ Interview with a retired PLA officer, Beijing, 2010.
- ¹⁰¹ Interview with a Shanghai-based scholar, Shanghai, June 2012.
- ¹⁰² Large-scale State-owned Enterprises (SOEs) such as the so-called "three buckets of oil"--China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) as well as State Development Bank, the world's largest financial institution for overseas loans, are powerful political actors in China's domestic and foreign policy arena.
- ¹⁰³ Zhang Xin, "Afghanistan re-opens request for corridor road", *China Daily*, October 16, 2009.
- ¹⁰⁴ Sen. Col. Zhao Xiaozuo made the following first and second point when explaining why China did not support the Wakhan proposal from the US in a Q&A session in a conference on maritime security in Beijing in October 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with a senior PLA officer who participated the deliberation and decision-making on the Wakhan Corridor issue, July of 2014.

¹⁰⁶ A relatively junior PLA officer pointed to the inclusion of some Chinese Uighurs in the CIA's covert training of mujahedeen to fight against the Soviet Union as a "bad aftertaste" of the PLA and its fears that the US would pull the trick again and train those who would eventually foment unrest in China. Interview with an active-duty PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with an active-duty officer, Beijing, summer of 2011.

¹⁰⁸ Such a view point was publicly expressed by Colonel Dai Xu. The author wants to note that Dai Xu in general held a more radical view on this matter, which is closer to a conspiracy theory, but his view, based on interviews the author conducted, is not shared by many other PLA officers though they opposed this proposal for other reasons. Dai Xu, "China will invite two wolves to its house if opening Wakhan Corridor to the US", March 23, 2010, *China Defense News*, <http://news.qq.com/a/20100323/001666.htm>.

¹⁰⁹ At least one tenth of the population who live around the Wakhan Corridor, mostly shepherds themselves, perform the duty of informer for the border troops and police. Cheng Gang, "Wakhan Corridor concerns China's overall security strategy," *Global Times*, December 28, 2009, <http://news.qq.com/a/20091228/001222.htm>; Zhang Wenmu, "Silk Road and The Security of West China: Historic Conditions, Rules and Response Strategy for the Rise of Central Asia", *Observer*, http://www.guancha.cn/zhang-wen-mu/2014_03_29_217863_s.shtml.

¹¹⁰ Chen Zhenxi, *China Broadcast Newsnet*, January 4, 2010, <http://news.qq.com/a/20100104/001879.htm>.

¹¹¹ "Debunking the myth about the 'Counter-terrorism Leading Small Group'", *Xinhua News*, May 26, 2014, http://www.wcn.com.hk/content/2014-05/26/content_846161.html.

¹¹² Ministry of Public Security trains tens of senior police officers each year, mainly those from Pakistan, Afghanistan and a few African countries. Interview with a senior former special police officer under Ministry of Public Security, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹¹³ In 1960, Premier Zhou Enlai decided to cut Kokang, a historically region of Chinese territory, to Burma, which was the first state to recognize People's Republic of China. Zhou's decision was strongly contested at the time by the local government in Yunnan. However, Zhou prevailed. Kokang becomes one of the few most fluid and open border of China, with residents crossing the border at a daily basis.

¹¹⁴ The widely circulated story indicates that it is the drug manufacturing facility that triggered the joint operation of Burmese military and Chinese MPS force against Peng Jiasheng. However, based on the author's interview with a senior PLA officer in 2011, the wrong intel fed to MPS by Bai was about a surprise seizure of massive guns and bullets in Tibet before Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. That is why the assault point was an almost abandoned gun factory, which Bai alleged to be the place where the guns in Tibet were found. As soon as MPS stepped into the gun factory, which clearly did not have capacity to produce new and advanced guns, they realized that all the intel they received were wrong.

¹¹⁵ A second interview in July 2014 with another PLA officer indicated that another reason for MPS to take down Peng is their difficult relations with Peng.

¹¹⁶ Some PLA officers who attended policy deliberations on Kokang argued that Kokang was traditionally part of Chinese territory, whose cession was made with internal debates in China in 1960. Another line of their arguments is that China has a moral responsibility for those who live in Kokang. Residents in Kokang are predominantly Chinese in ethnicity who have been mistreated by Burmese government as second-class citizens. Their rights of movement nationwide were highly restricted. They even receive a different kind of government-issued identity cards in order to differentiate them from native Burmese. The officers who advocate these "humanitarian" arguments insist that if Burmese government couldn't better provide for this group of people, it is not China's fault that these people's loyalty lies with China.

¹¹⁷ MSS, as a bureaucracy, is much smaller, poorly funded and equipped and assigned with a relatively singular mission in comparison with MPS. Therefore, MSS was mostly an underdog in turf wars with MPS. This conclusion comes from multiple sources in the PLA, MPA and MSS based on interviews the author conducted between 2009 and 2014.

¹¹⁸ Interviews with multiple officials at MFA and local government in Yunnan Province, 2012-2014.

¹¹⁹ Interview with a PLA officer, July 2014.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ This policy was put in place in late 1980s and early 1990s and applied in the Kachin rebel-controlled areas as well.

¹²² Interview with a PLA officer, July 2014.

¹²³ Minister of Public Security has always held the position of State Councilor as the Defense Minister.

¹²⁴ “Exclusive: Liang Guanglie Said PLA Could Assist the Handling of the Mekong Tragedy,” *Phoenix Satellite TV*, October 30, 2011, http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/zgchuanyuanbeisha/content-4/detail_2011_October_30/10273109_0.shtml.

¹²⁵ Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp. 182.

¹²⁶ The U.S. and ROK held the joint naval exercises in response to the March sinking of the South Korean patrol ship Cheonan in 2010, which both countries blamed on a North Korean torpedo attack.

¹²⁷ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang’s Regular Press Conference on June 8, 2010,” website of MFA, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t707494.htm>; “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang’s Regular Press Conference on June 22, 2010,” website of Chinese Embassy, <http://riodejaneiro.chineseconsulate.org/chn/fyrth/t710763.htm>.

¹²⁸ “PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff: Extremely Opposed the U.S.-ROK Military Exercise in the Yellow Sea,” *Phoenix Satellite TV*, July 1, 2010, http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/detail_2010_07/01/1702694_0.shtml.

¹²⁹ “China expressed repeated positions on the US-South Korea military exercise,” *Xinhua News*, July 16, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-07/16/c_12339243.htm.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Hong Yuan, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believed that the Chinese public expressed strong indignation regarding the U.S.-South Korea joint exercise. See “China’s other security worries,” *Wenweipo*, July 16, 2010.

¹³² The author does not necessarily agree on this argument laid out by some of the PLA officers. Even many of their colleagues in the PLA do not agree on this arrangement. The only reason to lay out this argument is because the author wants to show different arguments in the PLA’s internal debates on the assessment of the Cheonan Incident.

¹³³ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹³⁴ Interview with an official with MFA, Beijing, summer of 2012. This official’s account was confirmed by an interview with a PLA officer who was close to the decision-making on the response to the US-ROK joint exercise in the Yellow Sea, Beijing, January 2013.

¹³⁵ Shen Dingli, a professor at Fudan University, pointed out: “Even within Chinese EEZ on the Yellow Sea, it is wrong to oppose any military operation of foreign countries because some military operations are for peaceful purposes. It is un-peaceful operation China should oppose. MFA was right in the beginning but then followed the military’s wrong positions despite its knowledge that the military claims are wrong if held under strict scrutiny of international law.” Interview with Shen Dingli, Beijing, July 26, 2012.

¹³⁶ Linda Jacobson and Dean Knox “New Foreign Policy Actors in China,” SIPRI Policy Paper 26, September 6, 2010. A particular interesting analysis on the pressure exerted by netizens on China’s policy-making, from the Chinese perspective, was written by Wang Jun. See Wang Jun, “Cyber Nationalism, Civil Society and China’s Foreign Policy,” *World Economy and Politics*, Issue 10, 2010, http://www.aisixiang.com/download%2F8011_1_paper.pdf.

¹³⁷ Wang Jun, “Cyber Nationalism, Civil Society and China’s Foreign Policy,” *World Economy and Politics*, Issue 10, 2010, http://www.aisixiang.com/download%2F8011_1_paper.pdf.

¹³⁸ Analysts generally agree that: the Chinese public had relatively limited impacts on China’s foreign policy; Chinese government still makes foreign policy decisions largely on the policy’s own merit while trying to walk a fine line between the government’s own thinking and public opinions. See Wang Yizhou, “Civil Society and China’s Foreign Policy,” *zhongguo shehui kexue*, Issue 3 of 2000, pp. 28-38; Wang Cungang, “Public Participation in China’s Diplomacy and Its Influence — Three Case Studies from 2003,” *waijiao pinglun*, issue 3 of 2010.

¹³⁹ In June 2003, a few nationalistic websites organized the “protecting the Diaoyu Islands” campaign; in July several of them organized a campaign to oppose that the bidding for the construction of the high-speed railway between Beijing and Shanghai adopts Japanese technology in which they collected hundreds of thousands of signatures; in August these websites collected campaign and collected millions of signatures urging Japanese compensations after gas bombs Japan left during the invasion of China exploded and hurt people; in August, netizens burned Japanese flags outside Japanese embassy to protest Japanese landing on the Diaoyu Island.

¹⁴⁰ Wang Yizhou, "Civil Society and China's Foreign Policy," *zhongguo shehui kexue* 3 (2000), pp. 28-38.

¹⁴¹ Wang Xiaodong, "Chinese Nationalism Under the Background of Globalization," April 10, 2005, *website of aisixiang*, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/6392.html>.

¹⁴² In 2013, 55.6% of China's Internet users are male while 44.4% are women. See China Internet Information Network Center, The 33rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, January 17, 2014, <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201310/P020131029430558704972.pdf>, p. 13.

¹⁴³ In 2013, China's Internet users aging 10-19 account for 24.1% of the total; those aging 20-29 account for 31.2%; those aging 30-39 account for 23.9%; those aging 40-49 account for 12.1%. See China Internet Information Network Center, The 33rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, January 17, 2014. In some subgroup of Internet, students and young people account for a much more dominant percentage. For example, among the 300 million users of Weibo, the Chinese version of twitter, 32.5% are high school students; 23.6% are college students; and 21.1% are graduate students.

¹⁴⁴ In 2013, China's Internet users with an education level of elementary school account for 11.9% of the total; those with a junior high (middle school) education account for 36%; those with a high school education account for 31.2%; those with 2-year or 3-year professional school education account for 10.1%; those with a four-year college and university education account for only 10.8% of China's total Internet user population. See China Internet Information Network Center, The 33rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, January 17, 2014, <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201310/P020131029430558704972.pdf>, 20-24.

¹⁴⁵ In 2013, profession-wise, students account for the largest internet user group in China (25.5%); self-employed (18.6%); employs in companies and enterprises (14%); unemployed (10.2%); professionals (6.6%); farming (6.6%); those working for government (4.8%); service industry (3.8%); manufacturing enterprises (3.5%); rural labors working in cities (4%); retired (2.4%). See China Internet Information Network Center, The 33rd Statistical Report.

¹⁴⁶ Chinese political scientist Liu Junning pointed out that "nationalism is one of the simplest, yet most powerful ideology. Because (nationalism) is weak in theoretic coherence, it is thus most likely to be accepted by ordinary people who do not have any theoretical training." See Liu Junning, "A Four-dimension Review of Nationalism," in Liu Shitao ed., *Positions of Intellectuals: Nationalism and Fate of China In Transition* (Jilin: shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2001), p. 17; An Shanshan and Yang Boxu, "The Feature of Online Nationalism in Chinese BBS Forums on Topics Related To Japan," *qingnian yanjiu*, issue 2 of 2011.

¹⁴⁷ The government is worried about those who act more radically against the West and countries China has problems with for the purpose of discrediting the government's capability of handling the foreign policy problems and further discrediting the government's capability to govern the country. Chinese have a vivid characterization of such a delicate way of these behaviors: hold up a red flag in order to take down the red flag (*dazhe hongqi fan hongqi*).

¹⁴⁸ Chen Feng, "MFA Opens Public Diplomacy Section: Public in Close Contact with Diplomats", March 20, 2004, *Beijing Entertainment Messenger*, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-03-20/02332093160s.shtml>.

¹⁴⁹ Wei Siying, "Cyber Nationalism and China's Foreign Policy," *zhishi jingji* 5(2013); Shen Xuhui, "Rise of China's Cyber Nationalism and Impacts on China's Foreign Policy," *lingdaoze zazhi* 31 (Feb 2009).

¹⁵⁰ A series of disputes involving Japan aroused Chinese netizen's hyper-nationalism against Japan in 2003. This included Chinese netizens' movement to "protect the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands", netizens' mass signature collections against the granting the Beijing-Shanghai highspeed railway project to Japanese companies, the collective prostitution in Zhuhai by a group of 400 Japanese businessmen and law suit in which 13 Chinese citizens were injured by gas shells left by the Japanese army in its war of aggressions in 1930s and 1940s. Since then, it had been a routine practice of calling Japan and Japanese in derogative names by Chinese netizens and, by calling "traitors" and Japan's "collaborators", scaring off those Chinese who dared to stand up and make rational arguments. See Min Dahong, "Observation and Analysis of China's Cyber Nationalism: Take Sino-Japanese and Sino-ROK Relations as Case Studies," in Du Junfei, ed., *China's Cyber Communication Studies*, vol 3, September 2009, pp. 131-6.

¹⁵¹ Wang Jing, "The Iraq War and Public Participation in China's Middle East Policy," *Arab World Studies, Issue 4*, July 2012, pp. 95-111.

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- ¹⁵² Xu Bingchuan, "Incident of Zhaoyan Shows China's MFA Serves the People", *China Radio International*, July 28, 2004, <http://gb.cri.cn/3821/2004/07/30/149@249615.htm>.
- ¹⁵³ Kirk Semple, "After Call, Student Faces Deportation to China," *New York Times*, July 2, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/03/nyregion/03chinese.html?_r=0.
- ¹⁵⁴ Interview with a diplomat, 2012.
- ¹⁵⁵ Interview with MFA officials working on Asian affairs, 2010 and 2013.
- ¹⁵⁶ Adam Entous and Chun Han Wong, "Chinese, U.S. Military Chiefs Break the Ice," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 2013, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324063304578521160445646042>.
- ¹⁵⁷ Qi Jianguo served most of his career with combat troops and had little experience handling relations with foreign militaries or "military diplomacy." Because of his expertise and knowledge about the battle fields and hard military power, Qi is realistic, pragmatic and moderate in his worldview and threat perception. Qi made great personal efforts, listening to military analysts' suggestions and preparing for his speech. Qi spent almost the whole night awake trying to memorize his speech delivered at the end of the Shangri-La Dialogue. Qi's speech was very well received by the foreign audience on the spot. Qi was very satisfied with the result and accepted all the toasts in the celebration banquet with his staff, which was rare for Qi. Interview with Qi's staff, 2014.
- ¹⁵⁸ http://www.caogen.com/blog/infor_detail/49390.html.
- ¹⁵⁹ Interview with Wang Guanzhong's staff, Beijing, 2014.
- ¹⁶⁰ Interview with a senior PLA FAO officer, Beijing, 2014.
- ¹⁶¹ Interview with a MFA official, Washington DC, summer of 2011.
- ¹⁶² Hua said, "Academics have long paid attention to the history of Okinawa and Ryukyu. The matter has become prominent again against the backdrop of Japan's repeated provocation on the Diaoyu Islands and its infringement on China's territorial sovereignty." See Wang Zhaokun, Okinawa discussion aimed to show sovereignty over Diaoyu: academics, *Global Times*, May 10, 2013, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/780644.shtml>.
- ¹⁶³ "Editorial: Reactivate Ryukyu Islands Issue and Pave the Way for Revision of Official Position," *Global Times*, May 11, 2013, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/editorial/2013-05/3924225.html>.
- ¹⁶⁴ Zhang Haipeng and Li Guoqiang, "The Treaty of Shimonoseki and the Diaoyu Island Issue," *People's Daily*, May 8, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-05/08/c_124677463.htm; Liu Dan, "Japan Never Has Sovereignty Over Ryukyu, Why Even Discussing About Diaoyu Island?" *People's Daily's* website, May 8, 2013, <http://jds.cass.cn/Item/22808.aspx>; Zhao Yicun, "International Treaty Shows Ryukyu Doesn't Belong to Japan," *wenweipo*, September 24, 2012, <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2012/09/24/CH1209240001.htm>; "Editorial: China's Sovereign Claim for Ryukyu Islands Reasonable and Substantiated," *wenweipo*, May 10, 2013, <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2013/05/10/WW1305100003.htm>; "Editorial: Reactivate Ryukyu Islands Issue and Pave the Way for Revision of Official Position," *Global Times*, May 11, 2013, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/editorial/2013-05/3924225.html>; Zhang Haipeng, "Re-Visiting Ryukyu issues," *Huanqiu Shibao* (Global Times), May 17, 2013; Zhang Haipeng, "Re-discussing Ryukyu, What to Be Discussed?", *Global Times*, May 22, 2013, <http://jds.cass.cn/Item/22836.aspx>; Tang Chunfeng, "Review Our Position on Ryukyu and Ask Abe Three Questions," *Global Times*, May 20, 2013, http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2013-05/3948258.html; Lei, Yuhong, "Mudan Incident and Japan's Annexation of Ryukyu Kingdom," *Shijie Zhishi Zazhi* (World Knowledge Journal), issue 6 of 2013, pp. 52-55.
- ¹⁶⁵ Tang Chunfeng, former Councilor on trade, repeatedly raised his challenges against Japan's sovereignty over Ryukyu Islands-Okinawa in 2005, 2007 and 2010. Tang's voices were relatively unnoticed by China's mainstream media. However, in multiple protests in October 2011 against Japan, banners of "returning Ryukyu to China" and "liberating Okinawa" were first seen. See Lin Quanzhong, "New Debates about Ryukyu Islands' Status in Angry Torrents around the Diaoyu Island Dispute," *ming bao yue kan* 2 (2011), <http://www.wcaddl.org/news/?9.html>.
- ¹⁶⁶ See <http://forum.home.news.cn/detail/119139768/1.html>; <http://wfd.home.news.cn/blog/a/0101004844C40C3A94EECB83.html>.
- ¹⁶⁷ Major General (retired) Luo Yuan insisted that "Ryukyu is part of China and its sovereignty has never belonged to Japan" in an interview with China News Agency. See "Luo Yuan Discussing about Ryukyu's

Sovereignty: It Belongs to China and Has Never Belonged to Japan,” *China News Agency*, May15, 2013, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/0515/c136457-21485630-2.html>.

¹⁶⁸ “Qi Jianguo: Nature of the Ryukyu Islands Different From That of the Diaoyu Island,” *Phoenix Satellite TV*, June 2, 2013, http://news.ifeng.com/mil/special/xianggeliladuihua2013/content-3/detail_2013_06/02/25990486_0.shtml.

¹⁶⁹ Wang Yizhou, *Global Politics and China’s Foreign Policy*, shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 2003, 180.

¹⁷⁰ This was observed by Chinese analysts as a behavior change of the MFA in response to netizens’ pressure. See Hong Junhao, “Cyber Opinions and China’s Foreign Policy Decision-making”, in Hao Yufan ed., *China’s Foreign Policy Decision-making: Analysis of Open and Plural Societal Elements* (Beijing: shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007; Wang Jun, "Cyber Nationalism, Civil Society and China's Foreign Policy", *World Economy and Politics* 10 (2010).

Chapter Seven: China's 1979 Border War with Vietnam: Decision to Fight

Historians and scholars continue to debate why China chose to fight a war with Vietnam two months after it announced a drastic shift in the nation's course from "class struggle" to economic reform and opening-up. Deng Xiaoping recognized that to achieve his goal of economic reform China needed a calm, peaceful external environment, yet under his leadership China deliberately provoked a war with Vietnam, seemingly undermining this new strategy.¹

The reasons for choosing China's decision to go to war with Vietnam as a case study are as follows:

First, the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Border War – known in China as the "1979 Self-defense Counterattack against Vietnam" – is the last large-scale armed conflict in which the PLA fought.² This was not only the PLA's last war, but was also its last low-tech war, which shaped the PLA's modernization path for decades to come. The PLA's experience during this war has also arguably increased its cautiousness to go to war, especially when it is not fully ready.

Second, this war was fought on Deng's watch, and thus the debate on whether to go to war provides insights into his decision-making style and his relationship with the PLA more broadly.

Third, this war impacted China psychologically much in the same way that the Korean War (1950-53) impacted the United States. The 1979 war was a forgotten war, a war that the PLA will not eulogize as much as the "unparalleled fortitude and courage"

the PLA displayed in the Korean War when it recounts its “glorious” history.³ It was a war that China won militarily, but a failure in terms of casualties, the unspeakable trauma that it inflicted on the PLA, and a failure in both the strategic military goal of inducing Vietnam to end its operations against Cambodia⁴ and the rhetorical goal of “teaching Vietnam a lesson”.⁵ During the Sino-Vietnamese War, the PLA was militarily superior and commanded more trained soldiers on the battlefield.⁶ Nevertheless, the Vietnamese side “outperformed” the PLA on the battlefield.⁷ A victory at such a high cost in terms of casualties was humiliating because China viewed it as a war between “teachers” and “students” – Vietnam had been the recipient of Chinese military aid for decades, and its best officers were often trained in China.

Fourth, it was a war that both China and Vietnam until recently refused to discuss, since Deng’s instructions to “let the past pass” effectively sealed the military archives and prohibited military historians from studying this part of history.⁸ A policy issued by the central propaganda authority in 1992 explicitly prohibits “the publishing of any article, book and media product on the (1979) Self-defense Counterattack against Vietnam.”⁹ It is curious how Deng himself reflected on this war. As one active-duty military historian noted, “He (Deng) just did not expect the PLA would win such a ‘tragic victory’ in the war with Vietnam,” by which this historian meant that China would achieve military victory, but at a much higher cost than it anticipated.¹⁰

Finally, the Sino-Vietnamese relationship has yet to completely recover from the war’s aftereffects, with new sources of tension and disputes that constantly invoke past rancor and the indelible trauma left by the 1979 war.

Nature of the 1979 War

The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War was Deng's war, as it was his deliberate choice and determination that led to China's attack on Vietnam. China justified this war along history and geopolitical lines. For instance, Deng expressed to Lee Kuan Yew that through this war it aimed at curbing Vietnam's expansionist ambition in Indochina.¹¹ China hoped that it could secure material support from and a stronger strategic partnership with the United States by fighting this war. Deng's motivations, however, went beyond the reasons given above. Deng believed he could use the war to gain the upper hand in Party leadership struggles, and cleanse and reunify the PLA under his leadership. This chapter explores how the PLA's motivation, the Party-military relationship, and the civilian foreign affairs system impacted Deng's decision to go to war.

The senior leadership in Beijing and Hanoi have both tried to erase the 1979 Sino-Vietnam war from history, and in both societies speaking or writing about the war is largely taboo. Extensive interviews with retired senior diplomats, civilian and military historians, as well as military officers who served during this period, indicated that Deng's military comrades opposed this war. Professional military officers and leaders had serious reservations about the necessity of and justification for the war, and also questioned the PLA's military readiness to fight this war. In fact, the war was postponed after General Zhang Zhen inspected the frontlines and strongly opposed the original date.¹² In retrospect, the military's reservations were well-founded. However, the military's opposition stayed within the military circle, as the officers did not want to

undermine Deng's delicate political position in the Party. Deng was unwavering in front of resistance and opposition from his professional military officers.

Prior to the war, in 1978, Deng faced a delicate power struggle in the Party. In 1976, Deng was relieved of all positions and put under house arrest by Mao. Hua Guofeng, Mao's official successor, was the official top leader of the Party and the military. In mid-1977, due to the lobbying efforts of Marshal Ye Jianying and Deng's loyalists, Hua reluctantly reinstated Deng and named him Chief of General Staff and Vice Premier, but politically Deng remained sidelined. Deng recognized that he had one clear advantage over Hua – he was a decorated commander and a veteran of the Long March, with extensive combat and military experience. Deng looked to exploit this advantage to build political support. Deng needed a rallying cry that he could build support around, preferably one that would play up his strongest advantage over Hua – fighting a war.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) supported Deng's decision to go to war. MFA lent credibility to Deng's decision by providing analysis concluding that the war, if launched, could be kept limited, and that given the Soviet Union's international strategy and posture there was a minimal risk of Soviet military intervention.¹³ The MFA also predicted that the U.S. would support China's move to strike Vietnam, not only because Vietnam was the Soviet Union's ally in Southeast Asia and shared the Soviet's goal of expansionism, but also because the U.S. had lost a war with Vietnam not too long ago. Furthermore, MFA indicated that China could build stronger relations with Southeast Asian nations, especially Thailand, after such a war. Li Xiannian, who oversaw foreign policy at the MFA at this time, supported this war and was instrumental in providing Deng backing and convincing the Party leadership that war was the proper route.

This chapter begins by looking at the historic context of the 1979 Border War. The chapter then examines the role of the military's mindset, the Party-military relationship, and the civilian foreign affairs system in influencing this policy decision. Finally, the chapter links this case study to hypotheses developed in previous chapters.

Context: History, Territorial Disputes, Geostrategic Considerations

The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Border War was not premised on one justification, but rather reflected a congruence of reasons: the historical antagonism between China and Vietnam, territorial disputes between the two countries, geopolitical considerations, and Deng's domestic political calculations.

Seeds of War

The modern antagonism between China and Vietnam that was exploited in 1979 has its antecedents in millennia-old conflicts between the two countries.¹⁴ Chinese have an unequivocal affinity for Vietnam, viewing it as a needy tributary and an offshoot of Chinese civilization. Chinese also slight Vietnam by paying insufficient attention to its will, while showering it with generous help. Vietnam, on the other hand, emphasized Chinese invasions and Vietnamese rebellions against Chinese power, even while it was a recipient of Chinese help. China conquered the area around the Red River Delta and Zhao Tuo (also Zhao To), a Chinese general who strayed from his allegiance to the Qin Dynasty's Emperor, established a Vietnamese kingdom named Nam Viet or Nan Yue (South Vietnam).¹⁵ In 111 BCE, under the Han Dynasty, China annexed Nam Viet and

incorporated it as a province, which it remained until CE 939. For over a thousand years, the northern part of what is now Vietnam was under Chinese rule. Therefore, China historically treated Nam Viet as a local regime affiliated with China, and spread Chinese culture, Chinese-style bureaucracies, and even a particular type of rice cultivation to Nam Viet.¹⁶ The independent Vietnamese kingdom, Dai Viet, was founded and then forged a tributary relationship with China in CE 972. Under Dai Viet, Vietnam led incursions into China as the weak Song Dynasty was being battered by northern Qidan (Khitan) and Jurchen minority rivals.¹⁷ China under the Song Dynasty and the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty tried to retake Vietnam with little success. China under the Ming Dynasty and the Manchus during the Qing Dynasty sent troops to Vietnam when Vietnamese rulers appealed to Chinese emperors for help crushing its domestic challengers.¹⁸ This tributary relationship ended after France colonized Vietnam in the early 19th century. Clearly, China and Vietnam have a close but often fraught history.

The communist parties of Vietnam and China were “comrades plus brothers” (*tongzhi jia xiongdi*).¹⁹ This shared ideology formed a bond between the countries that endured as Vietnam struggled against France and then the United States to gain its independence and autonomy. The Sino-Vietnamese border became Ho Chi Minh’s “reliable rear area” and the only reliable source of military supplies when he was fighting the French.²⁰ Mao promised and delivered numerous and much-needed armaments and munitions to Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). In 1950, General Chen Geng and Wei Guoqing were stationed in Vietnam to directly draft war plans.²¹ By 1952, about 7,000 Chinese military advisors and troops were stationed in Vietnam.²²

While the CCP helped and supported Vietnam, the seeds of hostility were sowed when Premier Zhou Enlai pressured Ho Chi Minh to accept the Geneva Accords in 1954. This agreement extended Vietnam's separation until 1975, which many Vietnamese found unacceptable and believed was due to China's self-interest and Zhou's faulty judgment. The Geneva Conference was held after the DRV had routed the French at Dien Bien Phu, with the help of Chinese military advisors.²³ The first half of the Conference focused on negotiating a settlement for the Korean War, while the second half turned to deciding Vietnam's fate. China believed that Korea's fate was of much greater strategic significance to it than Vietnam's, and thus prioritized negotiations over Korea. Once China and the other participants reached an armistice to end the Korean War, which China's military was heavily involved in, it was eager to show some goodwill to convince the West that its idea of "peaceful coexistence" was a genuine one.²⁴ Premier Zhou's primary goal in Geneva was to achieve some deliverables to demonstrate China's desire for peace. However, the DRV did not share this goal. Ho Chi Minh and the rest of the DRV's leadership wanted to decisively win the war, unify the country under Ho's rule, and invade Cambodia and Laos.²⁵

During the second part of the Geneva Conference, Zhou Enlai flew back to Liuzhou of Guangxi Province and held eight meetings with Ho Chi Minh over the course of three days.²⁶ By threatening to cut China's enormous aid to the DRV, Zhou successfully persuaded Ho to compromise with the French and accept the partition of Vietnam.²⁷ This required the DRV to withdraw from certain territories it had just seized. Furthermore, Zhou articulated China's position that Laos and Cambodia should remain independent countries.²⁸ At this point, most soldiers fighting in Laos and Cambodia were

Vietnamese, and it was not difficult to imagine a unified Vietnam absorbing Laos and Cambodia, both of which the French colonialists considered to be parts of a greater “Indochina.” China’s position violated its previous understanding with the DRV on how to promote the international Communist movement by spreading Communism through victories in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

North Vietnam’s first generation of leaders resented China’s efforts to prevent them from defeating South Vietnam and the French and unifying their country, but nonetheless compromised and agreed to withdraw North Vietnam’s forces to the 17th parallel. Due to China’s strong opposition, Ho also shelved his plan to unify Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia under his leadership.²⁹ Ho’s compromise did not prevent the U.S. from intervening militarily, and as a result North Vietnam came to resent this bargain even more and viewed China with increasing suspicion. The sacrifice of Vietnam’s interests in 1954, complained by Vietnamese leaders such as Le Duan, secretary general of the Vietnamese Communist Party (1960-86), simply prolonged Vietnam’s civil war and made it much more costly in blood and treasure to unify the country.³⁰ China’s actions during the Geneva negotiations partly explain Vietnam’s later “ungratefulness,” despite receiving generous aid and assistance from Chinese for decades, and contributed to the context that led to the outbreak of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese Border War.³¹

The rapprochement between China and the United States, which began in 1971-72, further accelerated the deterioration of Sino-Vietnamese cooperation, as Vietnam viewed this development as China stabbing it in the back. After Kissinger’s visit, North Vietnam issued an internal report using an analogy of one brother fighting with an enemy, while the other brother chooses to shake hands with that enemy, to describe its displeasure with

developments in the Sino-U.S. relationship. Nobody from Vietnam's government attended the celebration of Chinese Spring Festival held by China's embassy in Vietnam in 1972, which was held on the same day that President Nixon shook hands with Mao in Beijing.³² Between Kissinger's and Nixon's visits, Premier Zhou flew to Hanoi twice to seek Vietnam's understanding of the changes in Sino-U.S. relations, but his efforts were futile.

Territorial Disputes

As North Vietnam relied on Chinese aid during its wars against France and then the United States, it made territorial concessions to China, which it then rescinded as it came closer to prevailing in its civil war. That had clearly caused endless disputes between Vietnam and China ever since North Vietnam won. This was a classic instance of ideology being unable to replace or overtake sovereignty and a country's national interest, a bitter lesson that China itself learned from its relations with the Soviet Union.

China and DRV maintained a cordial relationship in terms of territorial disputes through secret negotiations, peaceful territorial transfer and informal commitments. In 1957, China transferred the White Dragon Tail Island in the Tonkin Gulf to DRV, which may be swapped for the Paracels and Spratlys, which DRV recognized China's claims in 1958, though no documentary evidence could be found to support this notion.³³ On September 4, 1958, China issued a declaration that clarified what it considered to be its territorial sea, in which it claimed sovereignty over the Dongsha Islands, Xisha (Paracel) Islands, Zhongsha Islands, and Nansha (Spratly) Islands, which were then contested by South Vietnam.³⁴ Ten days later, North Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Van Dong sent a

diplomatic note to his Chinese counterpart, Premier Zhou Enlai, explicitly articulating Vietnam's support for China's claims.³⁵ Since China sided with the U.S. side at Geneva in 1954, Vietnam had protested China's actions, which would not have gone unnoticed in Beijing. A unified and stronger Vietnam did not bode well for the territorial arrangements previously agreed to by North Vietnam and China. Taylor Fravel's theory on territorial windows of vulnerability, in which he posits that the state that is "losing" in the territorial dispute is more likely to use force to prevent or forestall its decline as the opponent strengthens its position relatively, probably explains the 1974 clash over the Paracels. China was fighting South Vietnam, and perceived it as a legitimate operation because of the North's acknowledgement of China's sovereignty over the Paracels.³⁶ As North Vietnam moved closer to victory, China fought South Vietnam over the Paracels in order to hedge its position and cash in on North Vietnam's promises.³⁷ Although the PLA did not fire the first shot, analyses of this incident reveal that it was a premeditated attack by Beijing.³⁸

After the 1974 naval skirmish, North Vietnam wrote to China's Foreign Ministry, sarcastically thanking Beijing for "assisting by taking back its (DRV) territory (for the DRV)."³⁹ After the DRV unified Vietnam under its rule in April 1975, it publicly rebuked China, asserting that it "preempted and robbed Vietnam at the time of its difficulty."⁴⁰ After Vietnam's reunification, the DRV took over six islands in the South China Sea previously occupied by South Vietnam, and adopted South Vietnam's claims over the Paracel and Spratly Islands.⁴¹ In December 1976, Hoang Van Hoan, a founding member of the Indochinese Communist Party and a Politburo member in unified Vietnam (1960-76), was purged for his allegedly pro-China views (Hoang would later defect to

China, following the 1979 war). China did not take this action lightly and understood that the DRV was turning against Beijing.

Vietnam and China by this point had already escalated the fight over the Gulf of Tonkin. The two countries held the first consultation on the Gulf of Tonkin in Hanoi from August to November 1974, but these discussions went nowhere. Following Vietnam's unification, the territorial disputes between Vietnam and China only intensified. In May 1977, Vietnam articulated and publicized its full claims in the South China Sea, including 12 nautical mile (nm) territorial waters, a 23 nm contiguous zone, a 200nm EEZ, and a 200nm continental shelf extending from the Paracel and the Spratly Islands. Less than a month later, Vietnam carried out a combined sea-air exercise near the Paracel Islands.

By 1974, tensions along the Sino-Vietnamese land border had already escalated into periodic bloody confrontations between individual civilians and occasionally military personnel. North Vietnam accused China of illegally constructing railways over 300 meters inside the Vietnamese territory.⁴² Vietnam demanded in 1975 that China dismantle the portion of these railways that crossed into Vietnamese border, which China dismissed.⁴³ China responded by accusing Vietnam of using organized and deliberate provocations to unilaterally change the border. In June 1977, Li Xiannian met with Pham Van Dong, hoping to deescalate the border disputes and reduce tensions. China then proposed to hold eight follow-up meetings with Vietnam, but these efforts were futile. Incidents along the Sino-Vietnamese border increased in both number and intensity.⁴⁴

In early 1977, Vietnam started to clear the Sino-Vietnamese border by driving out its ethnic Chinese citizens and Chinese citizens who had been living in Vietnam. This policy was partly an extension of Vietnam's attempt to confiscate its rich citizens' assets

and thus purge the country of its wealthy citizens, since at that time its rich were predominantly ethnic Chinese. This policy further escalated tensions between the two countries.⁴⁵ After the second border conference in Beijing in October 1977, Vietnam expanded this policy's scope, as it began expelling its ethnically Chinese citizens from Northeast Vietnam. Many ethnic Chinese in the South were publicly humiliated, imprisoned, and lynched, and some attempted to escape by boat. Then, in March 1978, Vietnam further intensified this campaign, which led to the confiscation of at least 50,000 Chinese firms and the deportation of 320,000 ethnic Chinese to a special zone of concentration.⁴⁶ In response, through its low-profile Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs (OOCA), China published its first condemnation of Vietnam. This led to a verbal counter-attack from Vietnam, to which Deng Xiaoping publicly responded, for the first time condemning Vietnam for mistreating not only Vietnam's Chinese residents, but also China itself.⁴⁷

Forging of the Soviet-Vietnam Alliance

Once Vietnam unified, the Soviet Union intensified its competition with China to court Vietnam. In November 1955, seven months after Vietnam's unification, the Soviet Union promised a five-year aid program that totaled three billion dollars. In 1978, Vietnam joined the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and signed the Soviet-Vietnam Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, in which the Soviet Union promised to aid Vietnam in times of war. This put China in a precarious position, as there was the possibility that it could have two hostile fronts – the Soviet Union and Vietnam – combining to act like pincers against China. Thus, the Soviet-Vietnam Treaty

provoked a strong reaction by China, as Vietnam's territorial "provocations" took on a strategic dimension for China's leaders. A *People's Daily* editorial articulated this view when it wrote that Vietnamese provocations were "supported and directed by the Soviet Union."⁴⁸

As China and the U.S. moved towards the normalization of diplomatic relations, the Soviet Union felt threatened and escalated tensions with China. In 1978, the Soviet Union reinforced its military units directed against China and strengthened its nuclear deployment that targeted China. The Soviet Union strengthened its forces stationed along the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian border by deploying SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM), their most advanced missile system, for the first time in the Soviet Far East. The SS-20 missiles had a maximum range of 5,000 kilometers, which was much greater than that of the previously deployed SS-5, which had a range of 4,100 kilometers, and the SS-4, which had a range of 2,000 kilometers. Moreover, each SS-20 missile had three multiple, independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) nuclear warheads. Additionally, the Backfire bomber, which replaced the Blinder, had nearly twice the combat radius (5,500 kilometers), which meant the Soviet Union had the ability to hit targets anywhere in China, as well as most of Southeast Asia and parts of North America. In 1978, China became aware of the Soviet's addition of MG-24D attack helicopters and its increase of fighter aircraft to 1,200 (from 210 in 1965).

A series of events in 1978 made China feel enormously threatened. In April 1978, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and Minister of Defense Dmitriy Ustinov visited Khabarovsk and Vladivostok to monitor a joint military exercise that was modeled on a potential Sino-Soviet war, in an effort to intimidate China. On May 9, while President

Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was visiting Beijing, the Soviet border troops entered Chinese territory under the pretense of arresting a fugitive. The Soviet Union later apologized to China for crossing the border, but Beijing did not believe it was an accident. In the "Sino-Japanese Friendship and Cooperation Treaty" that normalized China's relationship with Japan, signed in August 1978, China added a clause on anti-hegemony in order to target the Soviet Union. On August 1, during a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the PLA's founding, Defense Minister Xu Xiangqian stated that the goal of the Soviet military exercise was to practice invading China, and that the biggest threat China faced came from the Soviet Union. In Xu's statement, he indicated that China needed to prepare for war with the Soviet Union.⁴⁹

While the Soviet Union was not directly involved in the 1979 war, it lurked in the shadows throughout. China wanted stability along its borders, and it recognized that the Soviet Union could destabilize its borders. One of the reasons that Deng fought this war was "to weigh the weight of the Soviet Union" (*cheng yi cheng su lian*).⁵⁰ In this strategic shadow-boxing game, the Soviet Union lost by failing to live up to its commitments to Vietnam.⁵¹

The Last Straw – Vietnam Invades Cambodia

By 1951, Ho Chi Minh had already made it clear that the DRV's goal was to "liberate the people" of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos and "eventually establish an independent, free, strong and prosperous Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia Confederation." China consistently opposed this goal and clearly supported Cambodia's wish to be independent from Vietnam. In 1977, Vietnam signed several treaties with Laos, including a 25-year-

long friendship and cooperation treaty. By the end of 1978, over 50,000-60,000 Vietnamese soldiers were stationed in Laos, while Laos' army numbered only 40,000 troops.⁵²

Cambodia relied on China's support to resist Vietnam's pressure to form a political union. China initially supported Cambodia only begrudgingly, as it wanted to avoid an open clash with Vietnam on this issue. In December 1977, Cambodia suspended its diplomatic relationship with Vietnam, accusing Vietnam of attempting to occupy its territory. In January 1978, China openly clashed with Vietnam by issuing a diplomatic statement, urging a ceasefire between Vietnam and Cambodia and calling for Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia. China also promised more aid to Cambodia, but declined to send its navy to Cambodia or offer security assurances.⁵³

China had long foreseen Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, but China did not expect Cambodia to be defeated so quickly.⁵⁴ By September 1978, China had detected Vietnam's deployment of forces on the Cambodian border. In early October, Xinhua News Agency reported that Hanoi was "busy making preparations for a large-scale armed invasion of Cambodia in the coming dry-season."⁵⁵ Even as the evidence mounted, the PLA did not want to consider the possibility of intervening militarily in Cambodia for three reasons: First, Pol Pot was committing atrocities so outrageous that even Beijing was hesitant to align itself too closely with the Khmer Rouge.⁵⁶ Second, it would be difficult for the PLA to send the necessary armaments and material support to Cambodia because it was too far away from Cambodia and both the railway and the sea routes were exposed to attacks by Vietnam.⁵⁷ Third, and most critically, China was in the middle of

launching drastic economic reforms and a political rectification movement and had no stomach for a military intervention that could undermine these efforts.⁵⁸

In mid-November, Deng visited Thailand in order to reassure Thailand that China would not sit idly by if it was attacked by Vietnam. In an attempt to stabilize the region and encourage greater resistance to Vietnam, China adjusted its policy toward Southeast Asian countries and openly supported their military cooperation with the U.S. Through these word and actions, Deng was attempting to send a warning to Vietnam. Vietnam, however, did not heed this warning and launched a large-scale invasion of Cambodia on December 25, 1978. Vietnam swiftly took over Cambodia's capital in two weeks (January 7, 1979). Chinese leaders were well-informed by their diplomats stationed in Cambodia regarding the atrocities Pol Pot committed on his own people and the chaotic situation in Cambodia.⁵⁹ However, China did not expect that Vietnam could capture Cambodia so soon.

The PLA's Mindset

After a decade of chaos due to the Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao's defection and death, and the arrest of Gang of Four, the PLA was more demoralized and divided than it had ever been since the Long March of 1934-35. There was no quicker or more efficient way to unite the PLA than to fight a war. That said, the PLA's senior leaders still held considerable reservations, if not outright opposition, to the decision to launch the 1979 war.

The PLA Before 1979: Broken and Divided

Prior to the 1979 war, the PLA was in serious disarray, as training and professionalization lagged behind and it became increasingly politicized. It was an army deeply embittered and internally divided, not only because of its extensive political involvement and therefore its contribution to a massive social catastrophe, but also because of a series of purges directed against various parts of the officer corps. At this stage, the PLA was stuck in a malaise, and Hua Guofeng, one of the last of the old guard from the Mao era, perpetuated this situation by introducing the “two whatevers” policy, thus supporting the status quo.⁶⁰

The PLA’s direct and prolonged intervention in the Cultural Revolution, which Mao Zedong ordered, was catastrophic for both Chinese society and the military. Mao, and not the military leadership, instructed the PLA to intervene during the Cultural Revolution, but the military could not object to Mao’s wishes and had to carry the Cultural Revolution forward. In most regions, the PLA tried to do the right thing by stabilizing the society and restoring order. However, the military also committed unspeakable crimes in places like Guangxi and Yunnan. In Guangxi Autonomous Region, more than 80,000 innocent people were killed during the Cultural Revolution, according to the official government figure.⁶¹ According to the personal account of Yan Lebin, a retired Public Security officer who was a member of the government’s investigation team afterwards, by confirming names and addresses they identified a total 89,700 people who were killed during the Cultural Revolution in Guangxi. Of this number, 3,700 were killed in armed factional fights, 7,000 committed suicide, and 79,000 were executed in an organized fashion by the PLA and local militias involved under General Wei Guoqing’s direction.⁶² In Yunnan Province, Tan Furen, Political Commissar of the Kunming

Military Region (KMR), supported “rebel factions” to seize power, which resulted in more than one million people displaced and/or attacked. Among them, 17,269 people committed suicide. Tan was assassinated in 1970 in Kunming. Tan’s successor, General Wang Bicheng, did nothing but continue the bloody factional fights. Without the 1979 war with Vietnam, the factional war in Yunnan would probably have continued for much longer.⁶³

Although some military leaders personally benefitted from the military’s active political engagement, the majority of the officer corps suffered greatly. Radicalism and factionalism led to repeated purges and the continued suffering of officers. For example, Guo Xingfu, a symbol of the PLA’s professionalization movement in 1960s, was condemned as a “bourgeois method” as soon as the Cultural Revolution began in 1966.⁶⁴ Guo was imprisoned, badly tortured, and openly humiliated.⁶⁵ Guo’s experience was not atypical, as hundreds of thousands of PLA officers and soldiers were mercilessly persecuted during purges within the military.

Radical campaigns not only brought turmoil to PLA officers’ lives since 1966-67, but also greatly undermined the PLA’s combat readiness and its strength as an institution. According to a regulation publicized by the CMC in 1966, half of the PLA’s time was to be spent on political education, while military training occupied only 40 percent of full-readiness troops’ time, 20 percent of half-readiness troops’ time, and ten percent of the time of troops dedicated to non-military affairs such as agricultural production.⁶⁶ The PLA had sent 2.8 million officers and soldiers to “support the left.” In 1964, the PLAAF’s fighter pilot curriculum required annual flight time of 122 hours, while in 1970 the requirement was lowered to 55 hours. In actuality, pilots, on average, had annual

flight training of only 24 hours in 1968, when politicization reached its highest point.⁶⁷ By 1972, only 6.2 percent of pilots could complete simple Operations Weather missions at night, and only one percent of pilots were capable of undertaking complicated Operations Weather missions.⁶⁸

After decades of radicalization and endless purges and persecution of officers, almost no one in the PLA's upper echelon was immune from being either victims or perpetrators (or both) of personal attacks and purges. Repeated purges and persecutions led to bitter factional struggles. Victims of persecution could turn overnight into prosecutors or informants on other officers.

Following Lin Biao's death in 1971, the PLA endured further organizational and morale crises. Lin Biao's fall brought down the majority of the upper echelon of the PLA leadership. In the wake of Lin Biao's death, an unprecedented purge was immediately launched, with Lin Biao's associates, innocent or not, subjected to humiliating public trials and sentenced to long prison terms, or imprisoned without trials.⁶⁹ Due to the PLA's organizational chaos during this period, the position of Defense Minister was vacant between September 1971 and January 1975. There were similar lapses and vacancies for positions such as Chief of General Staff and PLAAF Chief. For example, as the PLA Air Force was deeply implicated in the 913 Incident, "executive offices and troops of the Air Force had little trust in leaders of the PLAAF."⁷⁰ The PLA's crisis in morale was much more severe than its organizational crisis. As an institution that lived on honor, the PLA became completely disgraced.

"Whoever went through that period in the PLA smelled foul."⁷¹ The internal disunity in the PLA was so deep and pervasive that any senior commanders could play a

unifying role without antagonizing the opposing faction. Therefore, Deng transferred back to the PLA leadership those who had long served in non-military posts and therefore were relatively neutral in bitter factional attacks of the PLA. Geng Biao, who spent decades serving in the MFA as an ambassador, was among those transferred, and served as CMC Secretary General.

The replacement of the western front's commander just prior to the 1979 war also exemplifies the PLA's severe division during this period. One week after the war order was issued on 1 January 1979, General Yang Dezhi was assigned to command troops on the western front, replacing Lieutenant General Wang Bicheng, then commander of the Kunming Military Region (KMR). It was abnormal for the military to change commanders as the war drew so close and was only about one month away. Wang was replaced because he had been actively representing one faction against the 14th Army, which was supposed to be the main force fighting the 1979 war.⁷² Wang once publicly branded the 14th Army as a "traitor army," which caused the CMC to worry that the 14th Army wouldn't obey Wang's orders. General Xu Shiyu, Commander of the eastern front during the 1979 war, also supported Wang's reassignment due to personal animosity.⁷³

Zhang Sheng, son of future Defense Minister General Zhang Aiping, documented the following episode to describe how severely divided the PLA was before the 1979 war:

An enlarged CMC meeting was held at the end of 1978. It exploded into fights and quarrels (among the senior PLA officers). What left the biggest impression on me was how ugly the General Staff Department, the PLA Navy, the PLA Air Force, the Fuzhou Military Region, and the Lanzhou Military Region fought, accusing each other and reopening historic feuds. I still remember that my father spoke during that meeting, saying that the past was the past and questioning whether quarreling with each other helped to clarify anything. My father asserted that all sides needed to examine themselves first. In the end, Marshal Xu [Xiangqian] could not bear hosting this meeting. So he asked Deng [Xiaoping] to take over. Deng came onto the stage and only said two words – "meeting finished." Luckily, the (1979) war broke out on the border of Guangxi and Yunnan. Otherwise, the PLA would have continued this infighting."⁷⁴

By fighting a war, Deng could justify demoting two groups of officers whose loyalty was suspicious: those promoted through a fast track in 1973, and the radicals promoted by purging others and spearheading radical movements inside the military. Deng described those young officers who were promoted in batches in 1973 as those promoted by “helicopter” and “rocket.” “As for cadres who have risen by helicopter or rocket, they aren’t good enough...In the army there are company commanders who at a stroke have been promoted to the rank of army commander. It would be unacceptable even for them to become deputy commanders of battalions.”⁷⁵ Among the most notable officers promoted in such a manner were Sun Yuguo and Chen Daifu.⁷⁶ Deng was determined to eliminate such officers who were promoted due to their dubious political loyalty.⁷⁷ An imminent war was the best pretext to sideline this group of officers, who had negligible allegiance to Deng.⁷⁸ In 1979, three out of four deputy commanders of the PLA Navy and one Deputy Commander of the PLA Air Force, all promoted in 1973, were relieved from their posts and demoted.⁷⁹ Also, through the cauldron of war future military leaders would automatically rise to the top by proving themselves in actual combat, the very group of officers Deng would want to embrace.

Deng believed that fighting a war in 1979 served the PLA’s interests, as he reasoned that it would: reunite the officer corps and force them to work together toward a single objective; refocus its attention back onto its own modernization and restructuring; filter out the best PLA officers; and flush out the officers promoted due to ideological considerations and factional support.⁸⁰ While these reasons served as important motivations for Deng, they were not his primary reason to fight Vietnam. Deng was not completely confident in the PLA’s ability to prevail in such a war. Rather, Deng initiated

the war with Vietnam in order to test the PLA's mettle. After the major battles with Vietnam were completed in March 1979, Deng explained to the troops his decision to go to war with Vietnam by saying:

The PLA hasn't fought a war for 30 years. Is our military indeed capable enough? To tell the truth, we really don't have much confidence. The CMC has made a resolution to strengthen its training. It seems that routine training has limited results, though it is not completely fruitless. But whether the PLA is reliable or not will depend on how it fights in actual combat...It won't do without actual battles. So this is a great chance [for using the war with Vietnam to test the PLA]...To tell the truth, since the past decade, the military has had a bad name. After this war, its reputation will repair a bit. One has to learn how to fight by actually fighting a war. It made a significant difference by going to the frontline of war than not. The whole world knows that we haven't fought a war for thirty years, and we didn't necessarily win the war with Vietnam, as our cadre below the battalion-level never fought a war, and only some of the cadres at the regiment level have ever been in a battle.⁸¹

The PLA's Support for and Opposition to the 1979 War

Career PLA officers generally supported Deng's attempt to shift the nation's focus toward economic reform and political rectification. At the same time, most were unenthusiastic about Deng's decision to fight Vietnam due to the following reasons:

First, the PLA feared that a war with Vietnam would trigger the Soviet Union's military intervention. By the late 1960s, as Sino-Soviet relations continued to deteriorate, Mao had clearly identified the Soviet Union as China's biggest threat.⁸² China felt threatened by the introduction of the Brezhnev Doctrine, in which the Soviet Union insisted on its right to use force to impose its will on its satellites, which was operationalized when it invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. Mao feared that during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution the Soviet Union would use this doctrine to topple his regime. Then, in 1969, the Soviet Union and China had a tense military standoff over Zhenbao Island, which led to casualties on both sides and was the only direct military confrontation of the Cold War that involved two nuclear powers. Also in 1969, the Soviet Union expelled China from the Soviet-led Communist International (Comintern).⁸³ The

Soviet Union and Vietnam shared expansionist ambitions, Soviet in Afghanistan and Vietnam in Indochina, and were linked through an official alliance treaty, in which the Soviet Union vowed to defend Vietnam if it were attacked. China believed that the Soviet Union might take advantage of the situation and use the war with Vietnam as a pretext to strike China. Many senior PLA leaders opposed this war because it was a high-risk bet.

Second, the PLA fought alongside communist North Vietnam (DRV) and Ho Chi Minh during its wars against France and then the U.S. Many senior and mid-level PLA officers were once military advisors to and teachers of the DRV military. Attacking Vietnam made many of these officers uneasy. If China fought Vietnam, it would be difficult to justify all the material support it had given to Vietnam, and the deaths of thousands of Chinese soldiers who died fighting alongside Vietnam. It was difficult for these military generals to turn their backs on their former partners, with whom they had built bonds that were forged in the crucible of war.

Third, many officers believed that the PLA was not ready for battle, having just gone through decades of chaos and radicalization. The PLA was emerging from a period in which a large group of military leaders and officers were purged, which forced the military to abandon proper readiness training. According to a survey of 18 division commanders and 92 regiment commanders conducted in 1969, half of them did not know how to organize a combat exercise. The same survey found that among 109 officers in two randomly selected divisions, only ten percent knew how to conduct proper military training.⁸⁴ The PLA was in a weak state because it had a high proportion of new recruits, since recruitment took place mostly during the fall. Based on an inspection conducted before the 1979 war, one third of the hand grenades could not explode.⁸⁵ New recruits

without sufficient training occupied half of the troops. For example, the Second Company of the famous “Tashan Heroic Regiment” conducted only 18-day military trainings after accepting the 57 new recruits, which occupied more than half of the total soldiers (108) of this company.⁸⁶ Among the 57 new recruits, only 41 had twice shooting practices, and the rest only had only once shooting practice. In this company, only 32 soldiers received offensive combat training and none had been trained for defensive combat.⁸⁷ General Zhang Zhen, then Chief of the General Logistic Department, inspected the troops on the frontlines, concluded that the PLA was severely unprepared, and therefore advised the CMC to postpone the date of attack.⁸⁸ In retrospect, the PLA troops sent to the frontlines were so unprepared and lacking in training that some, at least those from the 43rd Army, “could not detect and clear mine fields” and “were unable to perform their mission because their leaders had a poor understanding of topography and map reading.”⁸⁹

Fourth, the PLA had traditionally placed a high value on the principle that any war it is engaged in needs to have a just cause. Yet in its eyes the 1979 war lacked such a just cause. The PLA found it difficult to brand this war.⁹⁰ Although Vietnam systematically mistreated and expelled ethnic Chinese living in Vietnam, and in China’s opinion bit the hand that had been feeding it, Vietnam had not invaded China. Could the offensive against Vietnam still be considered a “self-defense counterattack”?⁹¹ Additionally, in order to argue that the war against Vietnam was a punitive war due to its invasion of Cambodia, China would indirectly be aligning itself with Pol Pot, whom China knew was committing large-scale atrocities against his own people.⁹² Although China had supported Pol Pot for other reasons, to officially link its war with Vietnam to supporting an internationally condemned regime was very risky.⁹³ Finally, if the 1979

war was viewed as an instrument that China used to punish a country like Vietnam for mistreating or expelling ethnic Chinese, this could have caused great panic in Southeast Asia, a region in which China was attempting to improve relations with various countries, as most Southeast Asian countries treated ethnic Chinese the same way Vietnam did.⁹⁴

In 1978, the majority of PLA officers were still preoccupied with their efforts to rectify the wrongs they had to endure, or by the purification/cleansing movement that Deng launched to remove Lin Biao's supporters and the Gang of Four from the PLA. This is one of the reasons why the PLA's opposition was not articulated. A few senior military leaders, however, were vocal in their opposition. General Su Yu, a top PLA leader who was well-respected for his military expertise but was sidelined due to his rivalry with Peng Dehuai, clearly opposed the war.⁹⁵ Su's opposition was primarily premised on two objections. First, how could China attack its ideological comrades it once supported so much? Second, this war lacked justification since the PLA strictly adhered to the tradition of "war has to be justified" (*shi chu you ming*), which in practice meant "no first shot" and "no aggression." Su might have also opposed Deng's war due to a personal vendetta against Deng. When Su was sidelined, Deng sided with Peng. Su's case was not overturned until Jiang Zemin intervened in 1994.⁹⁶ Then-Defense Minister Marshal Xu Xiangqian was also not enthusiastic about the war. From 1977-80, Xu dedicated himself to reviewing each military region's strategy and operational focus, as well as the PLA's restructuring and rebuilding programs. Yet once the war began he diligently devised and enforced the war plans. However, in Xu's memoir, curiously, the 1979 war was not even mentioned.⁹⁷

Both Andrew Scobell and Zhang Xiaoming independently came to the conclusion that Marshal Ye Jianying was not enthusiastic about the 1979 war at least initially, but at the same time did not strongly oppose it. Eventually, Deng convinced Ye, probably on domestic political grounds, that the war was worthwhile and Ye came on board with the idea. By the end of 1977, Marshal Ye no longer expressed any opposition to Deng's war. Marshal Ye had repeatedly played the role of king-maker or king-saver during historic inflection points. In this instance, however, Ye did not intervene.⁹⁸ Rather, a small circle that oversaw the 1979 war was established, which Deng led and also included Ye, Nie Rongzhen, and Li Xiannian.⁹⁹

The PLA officers who disagreed with Deng on the war objected on both ideological and military grounds. However, they generally agreed with Deng's domestic agenda – the need to rectify the cadres who were wrongly persecuted, overturn Hua's economic and political agenda, and eventually replace Hua as the Party's top leader. In the end, Deng's arguments that he tailored to his military audience won them over: the PLA needed a war to unify it; and this war could be won, was meaningful, worthwhile, and could be kept limited in order to keep the Soviet Union out.

Deng's proposed war had a few strong supporters, with whom he consulted before making the final decision in mid-1977 to launch this war.¹⁰⁰ One of Deng's supporters was General Xu Shiyu, a legendary figure in the PLA. General Xu maintained a close personal relationship with Hua, but he often clashed with Ji Dengkui and General Chen Xilian, both ardent supporters of Hua and opponents of the push to rectify wrongful accusations leveled against a large group of PLA senior officers, known as the "two whatevers" policy.¹⁰¹ Xu also had a large appetite for war. After Deng appointed him as

commander of the eastern front, Xu recommended General Yang Dezhi, then Commander of the Wuhan Military Region, to replace Wang Bicheng, the controversial Commander of the Kunming Military Region and the presumed commander of the western front.

Those who sided with Deng on the question of the war due to political loyalty to him included CMC Secretary General Luo Ruiqing, Chief of General Politics Department Wei Guoqing, and Deputy Chief of General Staff Yang Yong. These men were all close associates of Deng who, with the exception of Wei, were cruelly purged by Mao and Lin Biao.¹⁰² In February 1977, Luo told Hua Nan, Editor-in-Chief of the *PLA Daily*, that he believed the “two whatevers” policy was wrong.¹⁰³ As soon as Luo was reinstated in August 1977, he directly instructed the *PLA Daily*, the most important channel for the PLA to deliver its viewpoint to the public, to publish an article entitled “the most important principle of Marxism.” This article greatly boosted the elite’s and public’s confidence in Deng, as it revealed the PLA’s firm support for Deng’s domestic political agenda and his rectification campaign, while also calling for abandoning Hua’s “two whatevers” policy.¹⁰⁴ Luo, Wei, and Yang were likely fully preoccupied by the political struggle against Hua, and therefore supported Deng’s push for war, as it would augment their campaign against Hua.

Some analysts incorrectly concluded, “unlike the discussions that preceded China’s entry into the Korean War, no serious debates about Beijing’s decision to go to war against Vietnam ever occurred at high levels.”¹⁰⁵ Deng did in fact consult his military commanders, probably first in a smaller circle in the summer of 1977. Deng also spent a year attempting to convince the larger officer corps that war was the proper

course of action. Most military commanders were unenthusiastic about the war for various reasons, but they did not want to voice their opposition, as such dissent would harm Deng politically during an already delicate power struggle. In other words, the PLA firmly supported Deng and wanted him to become China's top leader, and that political support outweighed its dislike of the war. "Let's fight and get rid of the calamity (*wo men yao da da hui qi*)," Deng told Geng Biao, then CMC Secretary General, when Geng briefed Deng on the opposition of General Su Yu and other military leaders.¹⁰⁶ By September 1978, the dust had settled in the PLA and a vast majority of the army accepted the war. Once the policy was made, the following months were spent deciding how to enforce it militarily.

Arguably, the PLA's opposition, voiced mostly behind closed doors, had consequences. The earliest deployment of the two regiments (the 121st Regiment of the 41st Army and the 40th Regiment of the 14th Army) came as late as November 1978,¹⁰⁷ just 70 days prior to the war breaking out, and most troops received notification of the impending war during the last two weeks of December.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the 58th Regiment of the 20th Army received war orders as late as February 19, 1979. After lobbying by Deng and his supporters, the CMC finally made it clear in November 1978 that a war with Vietnam was necessary. The war machine started rolling, and it was not until December 8 the order for operations was cut, only two months before the war was to begin. General Zhang Zhen, who was in charge of logistics, cited this as a reason that the PLA encountered difficulties during the 1979 war.¹⁰⁹

Party-Military Relations: Intense Party Power Struggles

The Party in 1977-78 was going through a period of intense power struggles. In October 1976, after winning Hua Guofeng's support, the PLA, led by Marshal Ye Jianying, arrested the Gang of Four. However, after the fall of the radicals, China was still in limbo. On the one hand, Hua was Mao's designated successor and held the top position in the Party; on the other hand, Hua lacked vision, expertise, and the elite political and military leadership's support. His insistence on carrying through Mao's policies prevented a large group of Party cadres and officers from being "rectified" and restored to power and therefore alienated a large group of Party cadres and officers, as well as intellectuals. Deng, in comparison, had the requisite expertise, vision, and his peers' respect, but had barely started to reenter political life. His power base, though sizeable,¹¹⁰ was still largely underground and had not yet been "rectified." The PLA in general firmly supported Deng.¹¹¹ Hua clearly recognized the challenge that a powerful figure like Deng posed, as he could galvanize strong support from both the Party and the PLA. It is not an exaggeration to say that as Deng Xiaoping started to make up his mind to attack Vietnam in the summer of 1977, he was fighting a political war himself.

Intertwining the April 5th Tiananmen Incident with Deng's Reinstatement

From October 1976 to May 1977, Hua butted heads with a group of cadres headed by Marshal Ye on whether to reinstate Deng and overturn the judgment on the April 5th Tiananmen Incident, a riot against the radicals after Zhou Enlai's death that was repressed and labeled a "counter-revolutionary counterattack."¹¹² The two issues were intertwined, as Deng was sidelined following the April 5th Incident because he was deemed the mastermind of the riot and Mao alluded to Deng as the country's foremost "rightist."¹¹³

Hua, then Minister of Public Security, loyally executed the campaign of attacking Deng, labeling him “the unrepentant revisionist line of the capitalist-roader” in February 1976. Mao then promoted Hua from interim premier to the first Vice Chairman of the Central Committee and Premier, which thereby consolidated Hua’s position as Mao’s heir apparent.¹¹⁴ Therefore, when Deng was unseated, Hua was a major beneficiary. By retaining Mao’s judgment on the April 5th Incident, Hua was attempting to block Deng’s entry back into Chinese politics.¹¹⁵ In March 1977, Hua told the Central Party Work Conference that it was necessary to carry out criticism against Deng because it was in accordance with Mao’s wishes. “We should learn the lessons from Khrushchev,” Hua said, implying Deng, as “China’s Khrushchev,” could completely undermine Mao’s legacy. Some in the State Council even demanded that criticism against Deng be harsher than criticism against the Gang of Four, which “aroused great indignation by almost all older cadres and was widely resisted and opposed.”¹¹⁶

Those who supported Deng exerted pressure on Hua to reinstate Deng in 1976-77. They were especially strongly motivated after Hua, while insisting on continuing to criticize Deng, presented the “two whatevers” policy formally in the Central Party Work Conference in March 1977. This meant, in Geng Biao’s words, “the Gang of Four was still in place” and “China would have gone nowhere if it followed this policy.”¹¹⁷ Marshal Ye, who was officially Hua’s deputy in the Party but was in reality more senior and experienced, sent a large number of cadres and PLA leaders to visit Hua and lobby him to accept Deng back into the leadership. Hu Yaobang and Geng Biao, who was in charge of propaganda, were both clearly against the “two whatevers” policy and vocally supported Deng’s reinstatement. Wang Zhen visited various senior cadres and argued

against the “two whatevers” policy “as emotionally as a warrior.”¹¹⁸ General Wei Guoqing and Xu Shiyong exerted pressure on Hua. Luo Ruiqing (later CMC Secretary General) and Yang Yong (later Deputy Chief of General Staff) travelled around military regions and lobbied military leaders to support Deng’s reinstatement.¹¹⁹ In the end, a political compromise was reached. Hua published Deng’s letter, written on October 10, 1976, in which Deng expressed full allegiance to Hua.¹²⁰ Hua was elected Party Chairman during the Third Plenary Session of the 10th CCP Central Committee in July 1977, while his supporter Wang Dongxing was elected Vice Chairman. Deng was reinstated as CMC Vice Chairman and Chief of General Staff, with a ranking behind that of Hua and Ye.

Deng’s Two-Front War and Building His Power Base

Soon after he was reinstated in the summer of 1977, Deng made up his mind about the war. As he was still an underdog in the political power race, Deng decided to “do a few risky but outstanding deeds (*piaoliangshi*) to send shock waves to this half-dead political state,” as he told Hu Yaobang.¹²¹

The domestic war Deng launched focused on the struggle against Hua’s “two whatevers” policy. Specifically, first Deng focused on providing opportunities for the younger generation, rehabilitating intellectuals, and restoring old cadres to power. To achieve these goals, Deng postponed and redesigned the just-reinstated university entrance institution (*gaokao zhidu*) in September 1977, by only relying on exams and abolishing the “recommendation” portion, which had become a hotbed for corruption and backdoor deals. Deng also set up the institutionalized skill evaluation system. All the above measures served to establish “a normal mobility structure and opportunity space

inside this stratum,” thus bringing hope for further social, economic, and political advancement to the younger generation and intellectuals.¹²² These policies, plus the suspension of the policy that sent youth to the countryside to do manual labor in December 1978, won Deng support from the younger generation and their families.

Additionally, in March 1978, Deng vowed to support science and technology development, while concluding that the intelligentsia was already a part of the working class. Deng’s move politically liberated millions of intellectuals from the imputation of “bourgeois intelligentsia.”¹²³ Finally, over 130 cadres above the level of Vice Minister or Vice Governor were rehabilitated in 1978. Both the central government and the military started to rehabilitate those who had been wrongly accused. In the PLA General Logistics Department alone, 2,754 people were rehabilitated in 1978.¹²⁴ By May 1978, more than 490,000 “rightists” had their names cleared, and 210,000 went back to work.¹²⁵ In November 1978, the “counter-revolutionary” label attached to the April 5th Tiananmen Incident was removed. 4.4 million of those who had been labeled “landlords” or “rich farmers” had these labels removed by 1982.¹²⁶

Thus, by the end of the 1970s Deng’s power base was composed of two major groups: older cadres and older intellectuals who opposed the Cultural Revolution and wanted China to return to its earlier, “ideal” state that it experienced from 1949-1957;¹²⁷ and young workers and young intellectuals who sought a new, democratic, and modernized China.¹²⁸

Deng’s power base could only be strengthened by continuous efforts to overthrow Hua’s “two whatevers” policy, which would liberate more of Deng’s supporters and release their political power. On May 11, 1978, the *Guang Ming Daily* published an

article entitled, “Practice sets the only standard to examine truth,” which Deng’s supporters initiated in order to directly criticize Hua’s “two whatevers” policy.¹²⁹ The majority of the top leadership at the PLA GSD and GPD, as well as the CMC, all stood behind Deng in his struggle against Hua.¹³⁰ *PLA Daily* immediately reprinted the *Guang Ming Daily* article. Deng spoke at the five-week-long PLA political working conference and reiterated this criticism of Hua. On June 24, CMC Secretary General Luo Ruiqing pushed the *PLA Daily* to publish an open criticism of Hua’s policy. In the three months following this article’s publication, local governors and leaders of military regions began to openly support Deng.

The PLA’s Allegiance to Deng

By the time Deng was reinstated, the Chinese leadership was struggling with a domestic crisis, with the economy nearly bankrupt, society battered and deeply divided, and the military heavily involved in almost all aspects of China’s domestic life. Two central tasks dominated the debate within the Chinese leadership: whether China should rectify the wrongs done to numerous innocent people in previous campaigns led primarily by Mao; and whether, given that the planned economy was not working, China should turn to a new economic development path. As of the start of 1978, even with the reinstatement of Deng, the direction of China’s domestic politics was still undecided, with Hua Guofeng occupying the three top leadership positions and supported by his own four-member “gang” composed of Ji Dengkui, Wang Dongxing, General Chen Xilian, and Wu De. The other group, headed by Deng and Marshal Ye, strived to rectify the wrongs of the Mao era and restore the names of numerous leaders who were disgraced

and persecuted during Mao's radical campaigns. The line of this division, as well as its causes, was clear in the Party: those older cadres and officers, staunch supporters of Deng, once they had their names restored, would return to the leadership position they deserved and therefore hold enormous political power. This scenario made the rectification of wrongs a flash point in the power struggle between Hua and Deng. It was a zero-sum game.

Even after the PLA arrested the Gang of Four, Hua remained a weak figurehead and did not have effective control over the military. As the PLA officer corps was battered by a series of purges and was bitterly divided into factions, most of the PLA officer corps placed their loyalty in Deng's hands, even though Deng was not yet the Party's top leader. Hua still tried to cultivate his people in the military.

Among those PLA officers Hua approached in an attempt to gain their loyalty, Su Zhenhua, the 1st Political Commissar of the PLA Navy, was the most receptive to Hua's entreaties. Hua approached Su promising that he would take the place of General Chen Xilian, then standing member of the CMC, who was unpopular and was being forced out by senior cadres (mainly Deng and Ye).¹³¹ Tension between Su and Deng was especially high after a military vessel from the South China Sea Fleet exploded and then sank in March 1978, killing at least two-thirds of the 300 sailors on board. Deng criticized Su as being "apathetic," and in the wake of this incident he ordered the PLA Navy to restructure. Su was offended by Deng's comment and protested it during a five-hour-long conversation with Hua on April 12, 1978.¹³² Su's relationship with Deng further deteriorated after Su planned to hold a naval exercise employing 120 military ships and 70 fighter jets in Dalian to greet Hua after Hua's planned return from North Korea in

May. However, Su obtained Hua's approval first and when he then reported this plan to his superior, General Xiao Jinguang, Commander of the Navy, the plan was immediately suspended. However, Su passed away at age 69 in February 1979, which removed one element of opposition to Deng.

Hua tried especially hard to garner the support of Marshal Xu Xiangqian, who came from Hua's home province of Shanxi and was a well-respected and senior member of the PLA. This connection with Hua partially contributed to Marshal Xu's appointment as Defense Minister and Vice Premier in March 1978. Xu, however, had little interest in factional politics or power struggles. It is doubtful that Xu lent his support to Hua in the political power struggle, despite his opposition toward removing Hua from his top position in the Party.¹³³ It is more likely that Xu disagreed with Deng on policy positions.¹³⁴ For instance, from the outset Xu and Deng disagreed with each other on how to approach the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As a result, Xu was likely to oppose the Sino-Vietnam War as well. Fighting a war with Vietnam inherently risked pushing China into a war with the Soviet Union, which Xu believed was a dangerous risk to take. However, Marshal Xu actively participated in war planning and implementing the war plan as soon as the CMC reached a consensus on the decision to go to war.¹³⁵ Hua also approached Xu Shiyu and Geng Biao seeking their support, but they both kept their distance from Hua. Therefore, Hua never really cultivated a power base in the PLA. The PLA senior commanders were loyal to and reliant on Deng's leadership instead of Hua's in 1977-78.

As the PLA's morale hit rock bottom following the 913 Incident, Deng brought hope to the officer corps. As early as 1974, Deng, who Mao had just reinstated, dedicated himself to military rectification (*jundui zhengdun*).¹³⁶ "The military has to act like a

military,” Deng urged.¹³⁷ He identified radicalism and factionalism in the PLA officer corps as the root problem that caused disunity and combat ineffectiveness. In July 1975, Deng emphasized “armament development and strategic prioritizing as the two protruding needs for making military preparations for war-fighting as well as guiding principles for military reorganization.”¹³⁸ The 1975 military rectification campaign Deng led pursued the mission of rehabilitating and bringing back officers wrongly persecuted during previous political campaigns. The campaign simultaneously focused on removing those who were close to Lin Biao and preventing the Gang of Four, in particular Zhang Chunqiao (Chief of PLA General Politics Department), from building up the radicals’ influence inside the military.¹³⁹ Yet, in 1976, Deng was purged again and put under house arrest, which dimmed the desperate officer corps’ newfound hope. Deng’s downfall drove many in the PLA to feel a grave sense of crisis. Some even quietly floated the idea of a coup against the Gang of Four.¹⁴⁰

Deng’s reinstatement in 1977 rekindled the PLA officer corps’ hopes. Deng made the request for the PLA to prepare for a war as early as August 1977, after he had just been reinstated.¹⁴¹ Deng asserted, “‘to put the military in order’ is the guideline for army building in the next three to five years” and “‘to make the PLA ready for fighting a war’ is the guideline before the war breaks out.”¹⁴² The CMC meeting in December 1977 made a formal decision to consolidate the military and prepare for war (*zhengjun beizhan*). This meeting also established detailed guidelines for military restructuring that would remove problematic officers and bring back Deng’s former subordinates and trusted allies to the military leadership. The reshuffling in 1978 affected half of the PLA officer corps at the division level and above, which inevitably hurt some officers’ career

prospects and made them resentful. However, Deng kept reiterating the message that war was inevitable to his officers in this process to quiet down these “noises.”¹⁴³ In 1978, the PLA reinforced the border with Vietnam with twenty infantry divisions.¹⁴⁴

As China’s top leadership from 1977-79 was bitterly split along political lines and locked in a power struggle, Deng had numerous reasons for launching the 1979 war, including geographic considerations, territorial disputes, retaliation against an ungrateful Vietnam that was repelling ethnic Chinese, and putting the PLA up for a challenge and forcing its unity. Deng also employed the same basic logic that China used when deciding whether to enter the Korean War in 1950-53 while it was carrying out the bloody land reform and repression of counter-revolutionaries. Liu Shaoqi best explained this logic: “How could the counter-revolutionary suppression movement flourish in a big way? The key is that (we) have the Korean War! The Korean War is very good in many ways, making a lot of things easier for us to execute. Because the Korean War drums sounded, and sounded so loudly, our drums on the land reform and suppression of counter-revolutionaries thus could barely be heard.”¹⁴⁵ Fighting a war, which was well within Deng’s expertise, would quickly elevate Deng’s prestige in the military and the country, rid the PLA of those with questionable loyalty, and remind people of Deng’s talents, which Hua could never match. Most importantly, it would make Deng’s “drum” of fighting the domestic political war “barely heard,” and thus would allow him to more easily execute all of the bold domestic reforms and, eventually, allow him to take power.

Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

The civilian foreign affairs system played an important role in supporting Deng's decision to fight Vietnam, which was mainly reflected in its leadership standing with Deng. The MFA provided analytical reports on the U.S. and Southeast Asian countries' possible attitudes toward the war and played functional but secondary roles in facilitating Deng's trips to Southeast Asia, the United States, and Japan. Wang Youping, then Chinese Ambassador to Soviet Union, formed the conclusion that the Soviet Union did not plan to intervene in case of a Sino-Vietnamese conflict.¹⁴⁶

In the lead-up to the 1979 war, Deng found staunch allies among civilian leaders, primarily in Li Xiannian, who was then Vice Premier overseeing foreign affairs and Vice Chairman of the CCP, and Chen Yun, Deng's political ally who spoke publicly against Hua's "two whatevers" policy. Neither Li nor Chen was considered a military leader, yet they both strongly favored the war.

Deng consulted Li Xiannian early on about the war and obtained his unwavering support. Li had several reasons for supporting Deng and his war. Li was actively involved in managing China's aid program to Vietnam before 1970 and then negotiating with Vietnam throughout the 1970s.¹⁴⁷ Li was assigned to decline the Vietnamese request for economic assistance in February 1977, which Premier Pham Van Dong did not take well. In June 1977, Li Xiannian had a long conversation with the visiting Premier Pham, which revealed a notable deterioration between the leadership of China and Vietnam.¹⁴⁸ Premier Pham recognized the revision of Vietnam's stance on recognizing China's sovereignty over the Paracels and Spratlys, but argued that its previous position was made during its struggle for independence "fighting American imperialists was above anything else," meaning that Vietnam made those empty promises to get what it needed to achieve its

highest priority.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, Li understood more than most Chinese leaders how much help China provided to Vietnam before its independence, and thus felt a deep sense of betrayal. Li's support for the war was genuine in this sense, which made him Deng's firmest ally in the decision to fight Vietnam. Additionally, Li's support for Deng and his war was politically motivated. Li was later implicated in the widely criticized "Leap Outward" policy (*yang mao jin*) Hua and Li carried out, which was basically a state-led, investment-driven program, with a focus on heavy industry. As this policy turned out to be a failure, Li, then Vice Premier in charge of economic development, was politically weakened. He was relieved of his responsibilities for the economy and shifted to overseeing foreign affairs.¹⁵⁰ Li therefore had every reason to follow Deng more closely in 1979. General Liu Yazhou's (Li's son-in-law) speech later revealed Li's firm support for the war.¹⁵¹

In addition to Li Xiannian, Chen Yun played a crucial role in galvanizing support for the war. Chen dismissed the worries some expressed about a possible Soviet intervention. Chen noted that the Soviet divisions along China's northern border were "seriously undermanned" and that any attack on China would require diverting forces from Europe, which would take more than a month to complete, as Ezra Vogel has written.¹⁵² Chen even made recommendations regarding war operations, which Deng took seriously.¹⁵³

The MFA is believed to have exerted considerable influence in the decision to go to war, as it had to advise the leadership on whether or not to fight this war, since war is in the end an extension of diplomacy.¹⁵⁴ In this instance, the MFA mostly followed the lead of its head, Li Xiannian. Li clearly supported the war, and his viewpoint trickled

down throughout the civilian foreign affairs system, as Li was overseeing the MFA's work. This was reflected in analyses the MFA presented, which corroborated and supported the decision to wage this war.¹⁵⁵ The MFA's analyses posited that the U.S. would support China's decision to precipitate this war, and most Southeast Asian countries would also side with China. The MFA's analyses also asserted that this war could be kept limited, without spreading to countries friendly to China such as Thailand, or drawing in the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁶

Additional evidence of the MFA's influence over the decision-making process can be found with regard to an episode involving Thailand. Thailand's border with Vietnam is so flat and vulnerable that the Thai government was afraid that if Vietnam launched an invasion, it would conquer Bangkok in a couple of days.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, Huang Hua, China's Foreign Minister, attempted to reassure Thailand when visiting the country by promising that if any country invaded Thailand China would not sit on its hands.¹⁵⁸ Vietnam for a host of reasons ended up deciding not to invade Thailand, which helped strengthen China's relationship with Thailand. During the 1979 war against Vietnam, China even invited Thailand's Commander-in-Chief to observe the fighting at close range. To avoid unnecessary attention that would invite Vietnamese attacks, the Thai military observers all wore PLA uniforms.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, the MFA was concerned that if Thai military leaders were killed on Chinese soil by Vietnamese troops while wearing their own military uniforms, this would trigger a significant diplomatic crisis and give Vietnam an excuse to invade Thailand.¹⁶⁰

The MFA played an important functional role in carrying forward normalization negotiations with the United States, which was a crucial precondition for the 1979 war.

However, it is clear that Deng still had the final say over the Sino-U.S. negotiations. Deng was the person who built the strategic relationship with Washington while also war planning against Vietnam. On November 2, one day after Vietnam and the Soviet Union formalized their alliance by concluding a treaty, China and the U.S. officially launched negotiations to normalize their diplomatic relationship. Five days later, the PLA General Staff Department summoned to Beijing all Deputy Commanders in charge of war operations, the Chief of Staff and the Chief of War Operations from the Kunming Military Region, the Guangzhou Military Region, as well as local PLA troops in Yunnan and Guangxi, to discuss war preparations. On December 8, the CMC issued the internal order to fight the war against Vietnam. Five days later, Deng personally joined negotiations with the U.S. to negotiate with Leonard Woodcock and expedite the normalization process. The MFA also informed the U.S. that once negotiations were completed, Deng intended to visit the U.S. in January. The frantic negotiations held from December 13 to 15 led to the publication of the Shanghai Communiqué, and China establishing diplomatic relations with the U.S. on January 1, 1979. On January 28, 1979, Deng visited Washington, and the war against Vietnam began two weeks later.

When and Why Did Deng Decide to Fight the 1979 War?

The 1979 Sino-Vietnam war was Deng's war. While the conventional wisdom is that the "crucial decision time was November/December 1978,"¹⁶¹ by the summer of 1977 Deng and his small circle of advisors had already decided to launch the war against Vietnam.¹⁶² General Hong Xuezhi, later Chief of the PLA General Logistics Department (1956-59, 1980-87), describes how in August 1977, after he was reinstated and arrived in

Beijing, Marshal Ye Jianying told him to head the General Logistic Department (GLD). Hong was eventually assigned to supervise China's defense industry after Deng stressed the "great emergency to get the ammunition ready" to prepare to "fight a self-defense war (with Vietnam)."¹⁶³ The timing of Deng's initial decision provides clues to the reasons why Deng made such a decision.

First, Deng launched the 1979 war to consolidate his power domestically, so that he would be able to gain power and rehabilitate those cadres who were wrongly persecuted. In 1977-79, China's top leadership was divided with regards to the nation's future direction, with Hua, the Party's formal leader, insisting on the "two whatevers" policy, while Deng sought to launch ground-breaking reforms domestically and break with Hua's policy. When Hua reluctantly rehabilitated Deng in mid-1977, Deng had much less influence and power relative to Hua. "From the summer of 1977 to the summer of 1978, Hua Guofeng still commanded the leading role on the historical stage of China."¹⁶⁴ Deng at that time was in charge of science and education, as well as the PLA, but did not have a major influence in the Party's direction and its most debated policy – whether and how political rectifications should be conducted. During the summer of 1977, Deng did not believe that the debate he led over the criterion of truth and the rectification work his supporter Hu Yaobang directed would be enough to undermine Hua's public and political support and provide the opening for Deng to assume power. Fighting a war, an area Hua clearly had no expertise and authority over, would be a quick way for Deng to substantially increase his prestige and popularity, and would allow him to consolidate political power.¹⁶⁵

Second, Deng believed that for China to reenter the world stage, it needed to show its new friends in the West that, despite a shared ideology, it had genuinely split from the Soviet Union. Deng also believed that China could gain much-needed respect, and technological and material support from the Western world by defeating Vietnam, a country the U.S. could not even defeat, and could pose a challenge to the Soviet Union.

Along this line of thinking, Deng wanted to copy Mao's success from the Korean War.¹⁶⁶ Mao's decision to cross the Yalu River and fight against the U.S. proved to be an unqualified victory both in terms of domestic politics as well as China's place in the international Communist movement. China, with a poorly equipped army, was still able to push back the highly advanced U.S. army and fight to a standstill, which allowed Mao to greatly consolidate his power and prestige. By choosing to fight a war with the U.S., Mao secured the Soviet Union's material support for 156 separate projects, which allowed China to start rebuilding its industrial base. Domestically, who could ever doubt or challenge Mao's decisions, when he had accomplished such a great feat of beating back the U.S.? After his victory in Korea, Mao even considered Nikita Khrushchev to be a lightweight. It was a complete victory for Mao, a lesson Deng took to heart.¹⁶⁷

Deng believed that by fighting the war China could gain political and material support from the U.S.¹⁶⁸ While Deng had strong reasons for going to war, he needed to be certain of the supports from the U.S. Deng once explained that China's reform and opening-up was primarily intended to open China up to the U.S. because "countries that followed the U.S. all become rich and strong" and "it is useless to open up to other countries if China does not open up to the U.S."¹⁶⁹ Equally important, Deng thought China would have been rewarded by the West, especially the U.S., just as it was

rewarded by the Soviet Union after the Korean War. Deng overlearned the lessons of the Korean War. Whether the 1979 war actually brought about the benefits that Deng envisioned is highly debatable. Even Chinese military historians judge that Deng's approach was out of sync with that of the U.S. in the late 1970s. One Chinese military historian attributes Deng's misperception to his generation's limitations.¹⁷⁰ Even with his impressive foresight and wisdom as a statesman, Deng did not understand Americans enough to foresee that the U.S. was not the Soviet Union and Carter was not Stalin.¹⁷¹ He wrongly believed that the U.S. would react the same way the Soviet Union did after China's victory in Korea by providing generous aid and technological know-how, which China badly needed.¹⁷²

There are others who argue that Deng achieved his goals with the 1979 war. "What did the war bring to China? It brought China enormous time (for development), enormous funding (through foreign investment), and enormous technology," according to General Liu Yazhou, Li Xiannian's son-in-law.¹⁷³ After the 1979 war, the Sino-U.S. relationship enjoyed a decade of a strategic "honeymoon." However, foreign direct investment (FDI) did not begin to takeoff until 1991.¹⁷⁴

Finally, Deng was launching comprehensive military reforms and needed to reunify the military, which was fractured as a result of Mao's political campaigns. When facing an exclusively military audience in 1979, Deng acknowledged that using war to unify the PLA was his primary consideration as a military commander.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion: Decision to Fight

1978 was a pivotal year in China's history – a year in which important military, political and economic decisions were made. Deng began laying the groundwork for war in September and November 1978, when the CMC held two war operation preparation meetings and began the military planning process.¹⁷⁶ The formal decision to go to war with Vietnam was made by a joint, expanded meeting of the Politburo and the CMC, which was convened in the Great Hall of the People in December. Deng, then Chief of General Staff, and Li Xiannian, who oversaw foreign affairs, articulated the arguments in favor of going to war. Within the Party, the political and diplomatic argument employed to justify the war emphasized that China needed to punish Vietnam for threatening China's geopolitical interests and prevent it from doing additional harm. In Li Xiannian's words, China needed "to throw a punch" to warn and punish Vietnam.¹⁷⁷ Yet in order to gain the Chinese public's support, Deng and his allies publicly emphasized the war's humanitarian aspects – to defend ethnic Chinese along the border and retaliate against Vietnam for expelling ethnic Chinese back to China. The next day, on December 8, the CMC issued the war order and the PLA formally began the countdown and run-up to the war. On December 13, the CMC ordered the troops (225,000 soldiers) to start marching into position. At the same time, four military regions along China's northwestern and northeastern border (Shenyang, Beijing, Lanzhou, and Xinjiang Military Regions) all raised their alert level to first-level readiness in order to prepare for a possible Soviet invasion.¹⁷⁸

As Deng continued to move towards war, in December 1978, the domestic political war surprisingly resulted in Deng's full victory. The 1978 Work Conference, which was intended as a way to prepare for the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP

Central Committee (CCPCC), lasted an unprecedented 36 days (in comparison, the historic Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCPCC took only five days). The 1978 Work Conference, which ended on December 15, 1978, also unprecedentedly included more than 200 local governors, military leaders, and ministers. At this conference, Chen Yun, Deng's political ally who publicly challenged Hua's "two whatevers" policy in 1977, once again launched a ferocious assault against Hua and his leftist camp.¹⁷⁹ Because of overwhelming support for Chen's proposal at this Party conference, Hua had no choice but to publicly repudiate the "two whatevers" policy and overturn the persecution of those who Chen drew attention to. The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCPCC was held from December 18 to 22, 1978, marking the official moment when Deng became China's preeminent leader and the prelude for Hua to step down.

While the PLA officially announced that it had launched an attack on Vietnam in February 1979, a war China fought for multiple reasons, for Deng Xiaoping, this war was a battle to win victory in the real war fought on the domestic front, the political war with Hua Guofeng, Mao's designated successor, who still occupied the highest position in the Party. The 1979 Sino-Vietnam border war was Deng's war. China's top leadership was fragmented due to the ongoing power struggle between Deng and Hua. Hua had a political power base and the political legitimacy that Mao's blessing brought with it. Deng's war with Hua hinged on the "two whatevers" policy – essentially whether the Maoist line would be continued. It was both a political ideological war and a war for power. With the "two whatevers" policy overturned, those wrongly persecuted during Mao's political campaigns could be liberated and restored, which would endow Deng with tremendous political power.

Deng and the PLA's career military officers were bound together by the same goal for the PLA's reform and China's shifting to a new development path. In order to realize these visions, a road block – Hua Guofeng's "two whatevers" policy, had to be removed. The PLA officer corps, distracted and bitterly divided, suffered from low morale and disunity. Deng's power base in the PLA lay with career officers who opposed the radicalization and politicization and called for the restoration of wrongly accused officers. However, a large number of senior PLA officers were not enthusiastic about and even opposed this war. Yet they did not want to make their opposition public, as they did not want to undermine Deng's already delicate position in the Party. These officers in the end were loyal to Deng in the power struggle with Hua because of their shared bond and vision. Therefore, the PLA's career officers yielded and sided with Deng in his decision to attack Vietnam. This case is illustrative of the PLA's reliance on and lack of influence over a dominant leader, whom they had a political stake in supporting. Deng needed the PLA's support in 1977-79, but the PLA was merely one component of Deng's broader power base that he exercised control over.

¹ Deng Xiaoping discussed about his thinking with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in October 1984 that "China wishes least to have a war as China is too poor and needs to develop itself, which could only be realized in peaceful (international) environment." This conversation was incorporated in *Selected Work of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume III, under the article "We Treat Reform as A Revolution."

² The widely accepted operational definition of an interstate "war" by Singer and Small indicates a militarized conflict producing 1,000 or more military casualties. See David J. Singer and Melvin Small, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816–1980* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), pp. 56.

³ There has never been an official commemoration for the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979. The vast majority of military archives on this war remain classified. Research on this war, conducted by both government and military institutions, as well as memoir, books, movies and mainstream media reports are scant, in comparison to Chinese war against Japanese invasions, the civil war in 1945-49, and the Korean War. It is fair to conclude that the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 is an officially forgotten war. In the *Contemporary China: The Military Affairs of the Chinese Army Volume I*, the book spent five pages (pp. 406-410) on the great accomplishments of the PLA and the significance of the Korean War, while the same book spent only a paragraph on the meaning of the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 (pp. 545), part of which argued the "sympathy and support" from "various governments, friends and all those peace-loving people in the world". See Han Huaizhi and Tan Zuqiao ed., *Contemporary China: The Military Affairs of the Chinese*

Army Volume I (Beijing and Hong Kong: dangdai zhongguo chubanshe and xianggang zuguo chubanshe, 2009), pp. 356-419, 523-545. The Korea War was hailed by China as “an unforgettable great victory” sixty years later, evidenced by the 12-episode documentary which was dedicated to commemorating the PLA’s bravery in the Korean War. The Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 has never been characterized this way. See “Unforgettable Great Victory,” Channel of Investigation and Findings under CCTV, May 25, 2013, <http://tv.cntv.cn/video/C10389/19f7688ee84340a5b06f02e46c231a05>.

⁴ On the PLA’s political objective, Edward C. O’Dowd had insightful analysis: “PLA troops would, in a lightning campaign, seize the capitals of Lang Son, Cao Bang and Lao Cai provinces and thereby force the Vietnamese to abandon their Cambodian campaign or to fight a two-front war.” See Edward C. O’Dowd, *Chinese Military Strategy in the Third Indochina War: The Last Maoist War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 3-7.

⁵ The *PLA Daily* reported that China suffered casualties of 4,000 military personnel, which is not credible given all the documents and memoirs available on this war. Li Cunbao, a PLA writer who received permission from Marshal Ye Jianying to access classified documents on this war in 1983, claimed unofficially that the 1979 war produced 6,000 dead and 21,000 injured. Among those war deaths, 500 PLA soldiers died due to China’s own shabby weaponry malfunctioning. According to the PLA’s statistics, the 1979 war produced 60,000 casualties on Vietnam’s side, including 42,000 killed, 10,000 injured and 2,000 captured. The Vietnamese civilians who perished in this war totaled around 50,000 based on Vietnam’s statistics. Interview with Li Cunbao: 1979 war, a punitive war, *Tengxun News Net*, November 29, 2013, http://www.dragonmil.com/html/201311/20/a64bd7_3.html. Interviews with four veterans of the 1979 war indicated that 6,954 PLA soldiers were killed and more than 14,800 were injured during the war between 17 February and 16 March 1979. “Feng Renchang and Others: My 1979”, Interviews with Feng Renchang, Li Yong’an, Yin Yan and Liu Wanchuan, all veterans of the 1979 war, *Sina.com Military Channel*, February 18, 2014. http://www.21ccom.net/articles/ljsd/ljsj/article_20140218100788_2.html.

⁶ The force the PLA planned on sending would be five times as large as the entire Vietnamese military, with the goal of “killing a chicken with the knife to slaughter bulls.”

⁷ See Henry J. Kenny, “Vietnamese Perceptions of the 1979 War with China,” in Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein and Michael A. McDevitt, *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003) 231. In comparison, the Korean War, according to China’s account, was a classic war of the weak against the strong, in which the weak won by forcing the strong side’s hand.

⁸ Phone interview with a senior military historian at Chinese Academy of Military Sciences, Beijing, 2013.

⁹ “In order to safeguard the overall interests of Sino-Vietnamese friendly relations, the publishing of any article, book and media product on the (1979) Self-defense Counterattack against Vietnam is prohibited,” according to “Notification on Strictly Following Policy for Propaganda on Vietnam (guanyu duiyue xuanchuan yao yange bawo zhengce de tongzhi), issued by CCP Central Committee Foreign Propaganda Small Group on 23 October 1992. See Luo Jiesan, “Several Reflections on Compiling Annals of Guangxi - Major Events (bianxie guangxi tongzhi dashiji de jidian tihui),” *guangxi difangzhi*, issue 2 of 1999.

¹⁰ Interview with an active-duty military historian, Beijing, 2013.

¹¹ Zhong Shan, “Lee Kuan Yew Remembers Deng Xiaoping’s Decision to Fight the Self-defense Counter-attack Against Vietnam,” *lingdao wencui*, Issue 8 of 2007, pp. 57.

¹² Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen’s Memoir, Volume II* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2003), pp. 167-177.

¹³ Interview with multiple diplomats and officials of the MFA, 2012-2014.

¹⁴ According to Vietnamese legend, they shared a common origin with the Chinese that dated back to the third millennium BCE. The earliest history record of a distinctive Vietnamese people is dated to 207 BCE. See David L. Anderson, *The Vietnam War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Tang Xiangyu, *History of The First Republic of South Vietnam: Prelude to the Vietnam War* (Taipei, Duli Zuojia, 2014), pp. 5-9.

¹⁷ Tang Xiangyu, *History of The First Republic of South Vietnam: Prelude to the Vietnam War* (Taipei, Duli Zuojia, 2014), pp. 7-10; Li Xiang, “The Anti-China Complex of Vietnamese”, *guojia renwen lishi*, March 3, 2014, <http://history.people.com.cn/n/2014/0303/c372326-24510413-2.html>.

¹⁸ See R. Keith Schoppa, *The Columbia guide to modern Chinese history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 32-33.

¹⁹ The characterization of the earlier Sino-Vietnamese relations as “comrades plus brothers” came from Ho Chi Minh’s poem that “Vietnamese-Chinese friendship is deep, like comrades plus brother” (yuezhong qingyishen, tongzhi jia xiongdi). See Zhang Dewei, Wen Zhuang and Wang Delun, “Victory of Dien Bien Phu Battle and Chinese Military Advisory Group in Vietnam,” *shijie zhishi zazhi* (World Knowledge) 10 (2004), <http://www.cnln.com/China/fs/20110625/238307498.htm>.

²⁰ In May 1963, Liu Shaoqi, then Chairman of the PRC, told Ho Chi Minh: “we are standing by your side, and if war broke out, you can regard China as your rear.” See Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, ed., *Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy* (dangdai zhongguo waijiao) (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1990), pp. 159.

²¹ Chen Geng helped to draft battle plans in 1950, each sent and approved by Mao Zedong. See Chen Geng, *Chen Geng riji*, (*Chen Geng’s Diary*), Vol. 2, pp. 21-36 (Beijing: People’s Liberation Army Press, 1984).

²² See The Writing Team on the History of the Chinese Military Advisory Group, ed., *Zhongguo junshi guwentuan yuanyue kangfa douzheng shishi* (Beijing: jiefangjun chubanshe, 1990), <http://shuku.net/novels/history/jsgwt/jsgwt.html>; Wang Xian’gen, *A Factual Record of Assistance to Vietnam against the United States* (yuanyue kangmeishilu) (Beijing: International Culture Press, 1990), pp. 25; Wang Xian’gen, *China’s Secret Military Deployment: Record of Aiding Vietnam and Resisting America* (zhongguo mimi dafabing: yuanyue kangmei shilu) (Ji’nan, Shandong: Ji’nan chubanshe, 1992). Wang Xiangen was a secretary at the HQ of the PLA Engineering Corps in the late 1970s and is currently working with the PLA General Staff. His book contains much useful data on the role of Chinese Army Engineering troops in Vietnam.

²³ China provided crucial intelligence support by seizing the French battle plan and sharing it with DRV. Wei Guoqing played a strategic role in the drafting of the Dien Bien Phu battle plan. DRV killed or injured 16,000 French soldiers and captured another in this battle.

²⁴ In 1954, China was eager to wrap up the Korean War as it just finished a disastrous civil war and badly needed a break to concentrate on its own construction.

²⁵ Zhao Xuegong, “*China and the First Geneva Conference*”, *Nankai Xuebao*, vol 4, 2004, 82-89.

²⁶ Pei Jianzhang and Feng Yaoyuan, “Zhou Enlai’s Major Diplomatic Activities: 1949-1975”, *World Knowledge Press*, 1992, 46, <http://bjzc.org/lib/89/sxpd/ts089021.pdf>.

²⁷ Since the Korean truce, China had provided DRV with four thousand tons of equipment and two thousand tons of food per month. See Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1983), pp. 193.

²⁸ Hu Changming, *Zhou Enlai’s Wisdom*, CCP History Press.

²⁹ A more detailed recount of China’s self-interested policies from the point of view of Vietnam could be found from an article wrote by Le Duan. See Christopher E. Goscha, trans., “Document: Comrade B on the Plot of the Reactionary Chinese Clique Against Vietnam,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, December 13, 2001, pp. 279-288, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112982>.

³⁰ Le Duan complained, “When we had signed the Geneva Accords, it was precisely Zhou Enlai who divided our country into two [parts]. After our country had been divided into northern and southern zones in this way, he once again pressured us into not doing anything in regard to southern Vietnam. They forbade us from rising up [against the US-backed Republic of Vietnam]. [But] they, [the Chinese,] could do nothing to deter us...[I complained to Zhou Enlai]: ‘Comrade, you caused me hardship such as this [meaning Zhou’s role in the division of Vietnam at Geneva in 1954]. Did you know that, comrade?’ Zhou Enlai said: ‘I apologize before you, comrade. I was wrong. I was wrong about that [meaning the division of Vietnam at Geneva].’ See Christopher E. Goscha, trans., “Document: Comrade B on the Plot of the Reactionary Chinese Clique Against Vietnam,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, December 13, 2001, pp. 279-288, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112982>.

³¹ China stood by Vietnam again and sent more than 300,000 troops and military advisors to assist DRV. China also provided generous material assistance and armament for DRV. Between 1949 and 1978, the aid China provided for Vietnam totaled US\$ 20 billion, 93% of which were donations. This came as no small treat from China as this was more than China’s total military expenditures for four years and equal to China’s educational expenditures for 10 years. This figure didn’t account for the expenditure of the 300,000 troops and military advisors China provided. See Ni Chuanghui, *Ten-year Sino-Vietnam War* (Hong Kong: Tianxingjian Press, 2009); Wang Xian’gen, *A Factual Record of Assistance to Vietnam against the United States* (yuanyue kangmeishilu) (Beijing: International Culture Press, 1990), pp. 25; Wang Xian’gen,

China's Secret Military Deployment: Record of Aiding Vietnam and Resisting America (zhongguo mimi dafabing: yuanyue kangmei shilu) (Ji'nan, Shandong: Ji'nan chubanshe, 1992). Wang Xiangen was a secretary at the HQ of the PLA Engineering Corps in the late 1970s and is currently working with the PLA General Staff. His book contains much useful data on the role of Chinese Army Engineering troops in Vietnam.

³² See Yun Shui, *Reports on ambassadorship to seven countries-General Ambassador Wang Youping*, p. 138.

³³ See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, pp. 269; Chinese government has never officially documented the transfer of White Dragon Tail Island (in Chinese, Fushuizhou Dao). A book published by PLA National Defense University briefly mentioned the "an island, called Fushuizhou Island (Floating Island) or Nightingale, which originally belonged to China, was transferred to Vietnam in 1957 and renamed as White Dragon Tail Island. The transfer of this island is significantly related to the demarcation of the Tonkin Gulf (Beibuwan)." See Department of Scientific Research of PLA National Defense University, *Selected Data Compilation of Disputes About Maritime Territory and Rights between China and Neighboring Countries (woguo yu linguo bianjie he haiyang quanyi zhengyi wenti ziliao xuanbian)* (Beijing, guofang daoxue chubanshe, 1992). General Ma Baishan, former Deputy Commander of Hainan Military Region who personally transferred the White Dragon Tail Island to Vietnam, remembered the transfer in a book. General Ma Baishan said, "After the Hainan Island was liberated in 1950, the PLA then liberated the Fushuizhou Island in 1955. A PLA platoon was stationed on the island, with military fortifications, was designated to manage the civilians as well... In March 1957, my superior officer sent me to transfer the Fushuizhou Island to Vietnam, with the order on a document which designated me as the full representative of the transfer... During the transfer, our troops were withdrawn, but civilians stayed and was commanded to change their citizenships to Vietnamese. Some civilians were displeased, saying that 'we are Chinese and why we should turn into Vietnamese?' Other facilities on the island, such as shops, were all transferred together (to Vietnam)... (The transfer was) mainly due to good relations between the two countries and we (China) and Ho Chi Minh were 'comrades plus brothers'. Since we were brothers and this island was located closer to Vietnam, (Mao decided to) transfer it (to Vietnam) through a ceremony." See Ma Dazheng, *Seeking Past and Today in Ends of Earth* (Urumqi, Xinjiang: hai jiao xun gu jin, 2000). Other books claimed that the island was not transferred but lent to Vietnam in order to build a radar base to provide early warning against American bombers, though such books did not provide either document or interview with credible witnesses. See, for example, Yi Shi, Yao Zhongcai and Chen Zhenguo, *South China Sea! South China Sea!*, (Guangzhou, Guangdong: Guangdong renmin hubanshe, 2009).

³⁴ See "The Government of the People's Republic of China Issued A Declaration on China's Territorial Sea," *People's Daily*, September 5, 1958, pp. 1.

³⁵ Full text of Prime Minister Pham's letter is as follows: We would like to inform you that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam recognizes and supports the September 4, 1958 declaration by the People's Republic of China regarding territorial sea of China. The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam respects this decision and will direct the proper government agencies to respect absolutely the 12 nautical mile territorial waters of China in all dealings with the People's Republic of China on the sea. We would like to send our sincere regards." See Sun Lizhou, "Flip-flop Vietnam," *Global Times*, July 18, 2011; Yun Shui, *Reports on ambassadorship to seven countries-General Ambassador Wang Youping*, p. 138.

³⁶ According to Fravel, when one state strengthens its position relative to its opponent, the other side is more likely to conclude that it is "losing" and therefore more likely to escalate and use force. See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, p. 30. In the 1974 naval clash with South Vietnam, China saw itself in a weaker position for lack of capable ships and sufficient training of its naval troops. South Vietnam, according to Chinese intelligence, gained advanced ships from the withdrawing Americans.

³⁷ In January 1974, that Chinese Foreign Ministry reaffirmed China's territorial sovereignty over the Spratlys, Paracels, Macclesfield Islands and Pratas Island. In the same statement,-- the first official one of its kind in more than two years -- issued grave warnings against South Vietnam for its "aggression activities". The South China Sea Fleet established the analyses in early January that as the United States was withdrawing from Vietnam, the ships and armaments the US left to the South Vietnam emboldened

them to become more aggressive on the sea. The ships of the South China Sea Fleet deployed on January 17 further reported back that they could no longer fend off South Vietnamese ships without using force. On January 17, 1974, Premier Zhou Enlai set up a contingency command headquarter in the War Operation Hall of the GSD. Deng Xiaoping, whose position as Chief of General Staff did not resume till Jan 5, 1974, commanded the battle. On January 19 of 1974, South Vietnam tried to drive out China's fish vessels and shot against Chinese fishermen and military vessels. the PLA Navy wasted no time fighting back. The battle was a clear victory for the PLA Navy, considering how dilapidated its armament and ships were and how lacking of training the Navy was. Take one example, the PLA ships on the sea could not talk to each other because of different systems of radios. The PLA Navy still sank one South Vietnamese vessel, killed about 100 South Vietnamese soldiers and captured 48 Vietnamese and one American liaison officer. On the PLA side, only 18 were killed, 67 wounded and one ship destroyed. See Jin Hui, Zhang Huisheng and Zhang Weiming, *Secret Records of the Sino-Vietnamese War (zhongyue zhanzheng milu)*, Shidai Wenyi Chubanshe, 1990.

³⁸ Between 1972 and 1974, as the partnership between Beijing and Washington progressed, the relationship between China and North Vietnam drifted apart. In November 1973, Kissinger, then U.S. Secretary of State, explicitly asked Premier Zhou Enlai to use his influence to prevent "a major offensive" by North Vietnam, in order to prolong the "decent interval" between the American withdrawal and the eventual collapse of the Saigon regime. By this point, Zhou clearly understood that Vietnam's unification under the North was imminent, and helped to persuade North Vietnam to moderate its offensive in 1974. North Vietnam subsequently waited until January 1975 to launch the major offensives to overtake the key cities in the south, and completed unification by mid-1975. See William Burr, *The Kissinger Transcripts*, The New Press, 1998, pp. 202.

³⁹ Ni Chuanghui, *Ten-year Sino-Vietnam War*, p. 36.

⁴⁰ Ni Chuanghui, *Ten-year Sino-Vietnam War*, pp. 36-37.

⁴¹ In May 1975, Quan Doi Nham Dan, Vietnam's military-run newspaper, published a map that included the Spratly Islands as part of Vietnam's territory. Vietnamese Communist Party leader Le Duan officially raised the sovereignty issue during his visit to Beijing in September 1975.

⁴² See King C. Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979: Issues, Decisions, and Implications* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), pp. 48-49.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ These incidents, according to Chinese side of statistics, totaled more than 100 in 1974, and increased to over 423 in 1975, 926 in 1976, 752 in 1977, and 1,100 in 1978. See Han Huaizhi and Tan Jingqiao, *dangdai zhongguo jundui de junshi gongzuo* (Contemporary Chinese Military Affairs), Volume I (Taipei, Taiwan: Tianxia yuanjian chubanshe (Tianxia Press), 2000), pp. 524.

⁴⁵ On May 4 1977, 500 Vietnamese soldiers attacked 51 Chinese workers on a railway construction site in Youyiguan (Gate of Friendship), which China claimed laid on its side of border.

⁴⁶ See Chen, *China's War with Vietnam*, pp. 54-68.

⁴⁷ Chen, *China's War with Vietnam*, pp. 60-66.

⁴⁸ "Our Patience Has Limits," *People's Daily*, December 25, 1978, http://www.21ccom.net/articles/ljsjd/jwxd/article_2012091467592.html.

⁴⁹ Tao Wenzhao, *History of the Sino-U.S. Relations (1972-2000)*, vol. 2, Chapter 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999).

⁵⁰ Interview with Deng Xiaoping's former interpreter, Beijing, 2013. General Liu Yazhou publicly made a similar comment on this point.

⁵¹ Interview with Deng Xiaoping's former interpreter, Beijing, 2013.

⁵² See Chen, *China's War with Vietnam*, pp. 158.

⁵³ When China's Vice President Wang Dongxing visited Cambodia on November 1978, Cambodia openly requested China to have the PLA Navy to board Cambodia and fight with the Cambodian military in case of a Vietnamese invasion. This request was raised by Cambodia for the second time. Wang had no authority to make such a promise. More importantly, the PLA was not willing to commit forces in Cambodia.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Xinhua News Agency, October 4, 1978.

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- ⁵⁶ Interview with a historian with close ties with Huang Hua and his family, 2013.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with a PLA military historian, Beijing, 2013.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Interview with an active-duty senior PLA officer who had a close tie with Huang Hua's family.
- ⁶⁰ The "two whatevers" policy dictated that China had to uphold whatever policies Mao had adopted and abide by whatever instructions the late chairman had made.
- ⁶¹ The book, *Guangxi of Today's China*, revealed that more than 80,000 innocent people were killed during the Cultural Revolution in Guangxi. See Editorial Team of Today's China Book Series, *Guangxi of Today's China* (Beijing: dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 1992), pp. 130.
- ⁶² Yan Lebin, "I participated in investigation of Guangxi's problems left by the Cultural Revolution", (*wocanyu chuli guangxi wenge yiliu wenti*), Yan Huang Chun Qiu Magazine, Issue 11 of 2012.
- ⁶³ TV documentary "Self-defense Counter Attack against Vietnam: Stand Up and Fight Back" (*duiyue ziwei fanjizhan – fenqi huanji*) produced by Hubei TV, September 18, 2012.
- ⁶⁴ Guo Xingfu, a deputy commander of a PLA company in the Nanjing Military Region, developed a teaching procedure for individual drills and small-group tactics in 1962. In late 1963, this teaching method was demonstrated to Marshal Ye Jianying at the General Staff Headquarters. Greatly impressed with it, Ye recommended it in a report to the CMC and then Chief of General Staff Luo Ruiqing asked the whole army to practice this method in 1964. Guo's military training method differed greatly from the stress on "men over weapons" which was favored by Lin Biao.
- ⁶⁵ Guo was "forced to wear a tall hat and go on shame parades around Nanjing in a cage. He was forced to crawl on the street under the heat of Nanjing's summer sun with a straw in the mouth and bumped his head on the ground for every step while calling out "I am guilty!"... Guo couldn't bear with this humiliation and decided to kill himself with his three children and his wife with electrocution... However, Guo and his wife survived in the electrocution but not his three children. Guo was sentenced to death for murdering his own children. Xu Shiyou, Commander of Nanjing Military Region intervened and changed Guo's death penalty to 20 years in prison. See Shu Yun, "Before and after Luo Ruijing became the CMC Secretary General", *China Communist Party History Web*, October 3, 2012, http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguoxiandaishi/detail_2012_10/03/18041815_0.shtml. Guo was eventually released after long-term imprisonment but was killed in a car accident a few years later.
- ⁶⁶ These requirements were part of the Decision on Reforming Military and Political Education Time Allocation of Troops, publicized by CMC in August 1966, under Lin Biao's instruction.
- ⁶⁷ During the Cultural Revolution, the PLAAF required every single communication between the control tower and pilots had to be started with Mao Zedong's words. Jiang Lijun, a journalist of the People's Daily, reported on this problem in 1967 to the leadership and was arrested and sentenced for five years in prison. The Air Force forced her husband, Zhao Baotong, a decorated Air Force pilot, to divorce her. Lei Yi, a researcher at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, served in the PLAAF at a younger age. He recalled such politicized communications. Pilots had to report to control before taking office by saying "Take off, march along Chairman's revolutionary line!" Tower would answer, "Use the Maoist Thought to occupy the sky, go ahead." When fighter pilots meet in the air, one pilot would say, "Serve the people, I need to climb 300 meters." The other pilot would answer, "serve the people, climbing allowed." In the J-4 fighters, a technician had to observe engine ignition at the tail of the fighter before the pilots stepped on the gas and continued the launching. At the height of the Cultural Revolution, when ignition started, the pilot had to call out "Unseat Liu Shaoqi (Mao's political enemy)!" instead of "ignited". If the ignition was successful, the technician at the tail would answer "Unseated!" and if not, "Continue to unseat Liu Shaoqi!" Once when the ignition was unsuccessful, the technician, a rookie, was nervous and called out "Liu Shaoqi unseatable!" which created a political incident. See Lei Yi, "When Igniting, Pilots Called Out 'Unseat Liu Shaoqi' During the Cultural Revolution", *wenshi cankao*, April 16, 2012, <http://history.people.com.cn/GB/198454/17669457.html>.
- ⁶⁸ "PLAAF Combat Readiness Seriously Undermined During the Cultural Revolution: Pilots Flew Less Than 24 Hours A Year," *kongjun shijie* (Air Force World), January 23, 2015, http://www.hangkong.com/2015/0123/9610_2.html.
- ⁶⁹ Just in Guangzhou Military Region alone, more than 700 children of senior officers who were suspected of scheming with Lin Biao were rounded up and sent to re-training camps. Yan Zhongchuan, Deputy Chief of General Staff under Huang Yongsheng, was in incarceration for seven and half years without trials and

were released without any charge. See Chen Hui, "In Name of Heaven, Tell the Truth," an interview with Yan Ming (son of Yan Zhongchuan,) *Beijing Morning Post*, December 14, 2010, p. C04; Yan Ming, *Unbearable Past Becomes History: Personal Experiences and Knowledge of A Descendant of The Fourth Field Army* (Beijing: Culture & Art Publishing House, 2010).

⁷⁰ Ma Ning (orator) and Xu Bingjun (compiler), "I became Commander of PLA Air Force after 913 Incident," *dang shi bo lan* 4 (2013).

⁷¹ Interview with a retired lieutenant general of the PLAAF, 2012.

⁷² Wang Bicheng, Commander of Yunnan Military Region, had been actively represented "faction of canon", against "faction of Eight". Faction of Canon was composed of PLA Air Force in Yunnan Province, and most officers of Kunming Military Region while Faction of Eight was mainly composed of the 13th Army. The 13th Army was later transferred from Kunming to Chengdu Military Region and regrouped into the 14th Army.

⁷³ Wang Bicheng, once close to Lin Biao, tried to push Xu Shiyu out when Wang and Xu were both working in Nanjing Military Region, Xu as Commander and Wang as his deputy. This led to personal animosity between Wang and Xu.

⁷⁴ Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*.

Coming from War: Dialogues between Two Generations of Military Officers, Zhang Aiping's Life Record, China Youth Press, 2008.

⁷⁵ Roger Garside, *Coming Alive: China after Mao*, (London, Andre Deutsch, 1981), p. 71.

⁷⁶ Sun was promoted to be deputy Commander of Shenyang Military Region at age of 33 and Chen to be Deputy Political Commissar of Wuhan Military Region at age of 32. Both were relieved from their positions in 1977 and put under investigations.

⁷⁷ The "helicopter" promotions of this group of PLA officers were part of official initiatives of Zhou Enlai. promoted by "helicopters". Zhou made this proposal to Mao after the 913 Incident to promote a group of young officers, which led to fast-track promotions of a group of officers in 1973. This group of officers included Ma Ning, former Commander of the PLA Air Force (PLAAF), Zou Yan, former Deputy Commander of PLAAF of Shenyang Military Region, Zhang Jihui, former Deputy Commander of PLAAF, Du Yufu, former Deputy Political Commissar of PLAAF, Wang Wanlin, former PLA Navy Aviation Commander of South China Sea Fleet, Kong Zhaonian, former Deputy Commander of PLA Navy Guangzhou Base, Gao Zhenjia, former Deputy Commander of the PLA Navy, Gao Zhenjia, former Deputy Commander of the PLA Navy, and etc. The majority of these officers were demoted/relieved of positions and put under investigations in 1977-79 under charges of implications with Gang of Four. Interviews with historians and family members of high-level officials close to Zhou Enlai indicated that contrary to public impressions of the harmonious relationship between Zhou and Deng, they had a competitive and even hostile relationship in early 1970s. Zhou put in place proposals to support Wang Hongwen's rise and the fast-track promotions of a group of young PLA officers, which were criticized and reverted by Deng Xiaoping in late 1970s. On Zhou Enlai's responsibility of promoting Wang Hongwen, an article of Hu Angang concluded that "Zhou Enlai played a crucial role" that led to Wang Hongwen's rise "by rocket" and that Wang's promotion was "deliberate arrangement by Mao Zedong but implemented by Zhou Enlai." See Hu Angang, "Institutionalization, Standardization and Proceduralization of Successions of Chinese Leaders," *guo qing bao gao*, Issue 37, October 31, 2007. An interview conducted by the author with the daughter of a former important subordinate of Zhou Enlai reinforced the conclusion that Zhou and Deng were not in harmony as much as commonly believed before Zhou's death. Zhou tried to fill up the power vacuum in the PLA after the death of Lin Biao and purges of Lin's camp. Zhou did so in 1973 by promoting a batch of younger officers with proven combat records. These officers promoted by Zhou were viewed suspicious by Deng, which explained Deng's later purges of these officers in 1977-1980. Interview with the daughter of a former close subordinate of Zhou Enlai, Beijing, 2014.

⁷⁸ Almost all these officers promoted through fast track were demoted or/and investigated for their association with Lin Biao or Gang of Four. However, they were promoted by Zhou Enlai in 1973. It is possible that these officers Zhou proposed to promote indeed had associations with Lin Biao and Gang of Four but were still endorsed by Zhou. Another possibility is that Deng and Zhou competed for power in the military and that Deng intended to put in place his own teams by getting rid of those he distrusted. The author interviewed a family member of a highly-placed official who worked for Zhou in Ministry of Public Security, who revealed that Deng launched a fierce attack against Zhou when Deng was first reinstated by

Mao in 1973 as Deng understood that Mao reinstated him for distrusting Zhou Enlai. According to this interview, Zhou was far from the image what Chinese public generally believed and admired. “Zhou would never side with the weak just because they own the truth,” according to this interviewee. “Deng tramped over Marshal Ye and took out Hua Guofeng despite Ye’s displeasure.”

⁷⁹ These three Deputy Commanders who were relieved of their positions were Wang Wanlin, Kong Zhaonian, and Gao Zhenjian. Zou Yan, Deputy Commander of the PLAAF, was also relieved of his position and subsequently transferred to defense industry in 1980.

⁸⁰ According to the author’s interview with a senior diplomat in Deng’s era, Deng wanted to do two things in the military by going into war with Vietnam: to test whether the PLA is good to use both in terms of loyalty to Deng and the military capability (好使不好使). “Without the 1979 war with Vietnam, Deng might have even less confidence in sending troops to crack down the Tian’anmen student movement in 1989,” according to this former diplomat.

⁸¹ Deng Xiaoping, Deng Xiaoping’s talk on the battle briefing on the Sino-Vietnam Border War (中越边境作战情况报告会) on March 16, 1973.

⁸² Michael Lynch, *Mao* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 197.

⁸³ A direct conflict was averted by a compromise negotiated by Zhou Enlai and Andrei Kosygin in 1969. However, Mao was convinced the Soviet threat to China still remained, which drove the strategic detente with the U.S. in 1972.

⁸⁴ Liu Guoxin, “Zigzag Process of Army Building During the Cultural Revolution,” August 1, 1994, website of the Institute of Contemporary China Studies, <http://www.iccs.cn/contents/299/8049.html>.

⁸⁵ Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen’s Memoir*, vol. 2 (Beijing: PLA Press, 2003), pp. 166-167.

⁸⁶ This platoon had nine cadres beside soldiers. See Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen’s Memoir*, pp. 170.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ See Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen’s Memoir*, pp. 171-172. The alleged date of attack was originally set in early February right after Deng returned from the U.S. on February 5. However, upon Zhang Zhen’s advice, the date of attack was postponed for almost two weeks to February 17.

⁸⁹ Based on a book written by the Guangzhou Military Region Infantry School, Edward C. O’Dowd and John F. Corbett, Jr., reviewed and analyzed the lessons learned from the 1979 war. The primary source for the perspective of the students at the Guangzhou Military Region Infantry School is an internal document prepared by the Guangzhou Military Region Forward Political Department Cadre Section, ZhongYue Bianjing Ziwei Haunji Zuozhan Ganbu Gongzuo Ziliao Huibian (Compilation of Materials on Cadre Work in the Counterattack in Self-defense on the Sino-Vietnamese Border), No location: Published by the compiler, May 1979. See Edward C. O’Dowd and John F. Corbett, Jr., “The 1979 Chinese Campaign in Vietnam: Lessons Learned,” in Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell, and Larry M. Wortzel ed., *The Lessons of History: The Chinese People’s Liberation Army at 75* (Washington: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), pp. 356.

⁹⁰ Interview with a PLA historian, October 2013.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² China’s knowledge about atrocities committed by Pol Pot was evidenced by Zhou Enlai giving advice from his hospital bed to the visiting Pol Pot in 1975 that all the atrocities were “not appropriate” and should be stopped. See Yang Tianshi, *Guoji Guangjiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai cishuo chubanshe, 2005), pp. 221.

⁹³ Interview with a PLA historian, October 2013.

⁹⁴ The Indonesian killings of 1965–1966 were an anti-communist purge following a failed coup of the 30 September Movement in Indonesia. A million alleged communists and intellectuals, mostly ethnic Chinese, were brutally oppressed and killed under the rule of General Suharto. See Justin McDonnell, “Interview with Joshua Oppenheimer who directed *The Act of Killing*,” *The Diplomat*, January 23, 2014. In Cambodia, two thirds of 200,000 ethnic Chinese were killed between 1975 and 1979. Joachim Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Cambodia Vol 3: Profile of Austro-Thai and Sinitic-Speaking Peoples* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 2011), pp. 201.

⁹⁵ Interview with a PLA Maj. Gen. of Academy of Military Sciences.

⁹⁶ Liang Zheng, “Wrong accusation and rectification of General Su Yu”, *Wuhan Wenshi Ziliao*, Issue 12, 2009; also interviews with a retired PLA officer at Academy of Military Sciences who was familiar with General Su Yu.

⁹⁷ Xu Xiangqian's personal memoir did not mention his role in 1979 war at all. However, the Biography of Xu Xiangqian, briefly and vaguely explained his role in the 1979 war. See Xu Xiangqian, *Xu Xiangqian's Memoir* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2007); and Drafting team of the PLA NDU, *Biography of Xu Xiangqian* (Beijing: dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 1991).

⁹⁸ Interview with a former senior translator of Deng Xiaoping, August 2013.

⁹⁹ Interview with a retired PLA historian at Academy of Military Sciences, summer of 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with a retired PLA officer in summer of 2012; Deng first consulted with his small circle of advisers and close associates in the 2nd Field Army, according to the interview with You Ji, June 2013, in Beijing.

¹⁰¹ Yu Guangyuan, Appendix: A conversation Deng Xiaoping had with nine people including Xu Shiyu, from "The Historic Turning Point I Experienced in 1978: Before and Behind Curtains of Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCPCC", Central Translation Press, 2008.

¹⁰² Luo, once a potential challenger to Lin Biao, was purged and disabled after an attempted suicide in 1966.

¹⁰³ Shi Shanyu, "30 years of reform and opening-up: generals who were active in debates about standard of truth", *PLA Daily*, Oct 21, 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Shi Shanyu, "30 years of reform."

¹⁰⁵ Xiaoming Zhang, Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to go to War with Vietnam, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 12, Number 3, Summer 2010, pp. 3-29, <http://myweb.rollins.edu/tlairson/china/chivietwar.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with an active-duty military historian, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ The formal order was issued in December 1978 but prior to that, minor troops were move to the border region.

¹⁰⁸ One PLA officer, who participated in the 1979 war, complained that the military preparation was too little as the decision was publicized too late. This officer's troops had to enter the front line by railways from Jiangxi Province. However, civilian and military trains shared the same railway. Moreover, as the PLA wanted to conceal troop movement, they could not stop the civilian railway transportation, but had to find the lapse of civilian transportations to send in the military trains, which used predominantly cargo trains. This made the troop movement extremely slow. Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen's Memoir*, Volume II (Beijing: PLA Press, 2003), pp. 165-166.

¹¹⁰ During the Cultural Revolution, government officials who were targeted with formal investigations accounted for 17.5% of total government officials. About 75% of officials above the administrative level of Vice Ministers and Vice Governors had been under formal investigations by 1976. See Dai Huang, *Hu Yaobang and Redressing Unjust, False And Wrong Cases* (Beijing: gongren chubanshe, 2004).

¹¹¹ Hua Guofeng cultivated a few supporters such as Su Zhenhua, Political Commissar of the PLA Navy and to a large extent Marshal Xu Xiangqian.

¹¹² On 5 April 1976, China's public protests heightened when mourning for the death of Zhou Enlai was restricted. The undercurrent of this incident was a public denunciation of the Gang of Four and the leftist line, which turned into spontaneous demonstrations of nearly a million people and occasional riots. Mao renounced this incident as a counterrevolutionary movement and hundreds of protesters were arrested. This incident became a pretext for Mao to remove Deng Xiaoping from all his positions in the Party and PLA and establish Hua Guofeng as Mao's official successor. The implication of the April 5 Tian'anmen Incident was that this first massive protest indicated accumulated public anger towards Mao's catastrophic policies for decades and revealed the public support for the arrest of the Gang of Four half a year later. See Michael Dillon, *China: A Cultural and Historical Dictionary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 13; Yuwu Song, *Biographical Dictionary of the People's Republic of China* (London and Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2013), pp. 62-63.

¹¹³ Editorial, "What the Tian'anmen Incident Tells," *People's Daily*, April 18, 1976; Liang Xiao, "Deng Xiaoping and the Counter-Revolutionary Incident at the Tian'anmen Square," *People's Daily*, May 28, 1976.

¹¹⁴ The PLA military history drafting team, ed., *Chinese People's Liberation Army History*, Volume 6 (May 1966-December 1978) (Beijing: Academy of Military Sciences Press, 2011), pp. 292.

¹¹⁵ Some historians argue that Hua Guofeng did not intentionally prevent Deng Xiaoping's reinstatement. Evidences that are cited to support this line of argument include Hua's editing of the fifth volume of

Selected Works of Mao Zedong. Hua did not include any of Mao's accusations of Deng in the April 5th Tian'anmen incident but kept all praises Mao had for Deng. Also, on the day Mao deceased, Jiang Qing raised the proposal to banish Deng from the Party but her proposal was resisted by both Ye Jianying and Hua Guofeng. This line of argument believed that Hua only wanted to wait for the right time for Deng to be reinstated. See Deng Zhongyuan, *Pivotal Years: Deng Xiaoping in 1975-1982* (Beijing: dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2014). However, the author believed that Hua stood together with Ye Jianying to support Deng when the radicals were still in power in 1976 and after the Gang of Four was taken down, Hua saw the threat to his personal authority from Deng. The evidences included: Hua Guofeng instructed the propaganda chief twenty days after the arrest of the Gang of Four that the Party propaganda should focus on its criticism against the Gang of Four while the criticism should be directed against Deng as well; investigations, searches and arrests, on Hua's direct orders, of those who advocated Deng's reinstatement were carried out in January-May 1977. Li Xin, one of the officials in charge of the Party propaganda agencies, transmitted Hua's messages that both the April 5th Tian'anmen Incident and Deng's downfall were Mao's personal decisions; the direct purpose of raising "two whatevers" policies was to obstruct the rectifications of both the two (the April 5th Incident and Deng's downfall). See Chen Ziming, "The April 5th Incident in Broad Historic Perspectives," in Chen Ziming et al., eds, *April 5th Movement: Turning Point of China's 20th Century – Memory and Thinking After Thirty Years* (Hong Kong: bozhi chubanshe, 2006).

¹¹⁶ Ye Xuanji (nephew of Ye Jianying), "Marshal Ye Before and After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee," *Southern Weekend*, December 18, 2008, <http://www.infzm.com/content/19143/0>.

¹¹⁷ Ye Yonglie, *Deng Xiaoping gaibian Zhongguo: 1978 Zhongguo mingyun da zhuanzhe (Deng Xiaoping Changes China – 1978: Turning Point in China's Destiny)* (Nanchang: Jiangxi Renmin Chubanshe, 2008).

¹¹⁸ Ye Xuanji, "Marshal Ye Before and After"..

¹¹⁹ Shui Xinying, "Yang Yong Missed the Position of Chief of General Staff," *ling dao wen cui*, Issue 11 of 2013.

¹²⁰ In the letter Deng wrote to Hua on 10 October 1976, Deng said, "I wholeheartedly support the decision on Comrade Hua Guofeng as Chairman of the CCP Central Committee and Chairman of Central Military Commission. I hail the great significance of this extremely important decision to the Party and the socialist cause. Comrade Hua Guofeng was not only ideologically and politically the most suitable successor to Chairman Mao, he, in terms of age, could guarantee the stability of the proletariat leadership for at least fifteen or twenty years, it was so important for the Party, the nation's people and the military! How cannot people rejoice it?" "I cannot help but shout long live, long live, long live (the Party)! I used this short letter to express the true feelings of my heart." "Long live to the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua!"

¹²¹ Shi Dongbing, *Short Spring and Autumn* (Beijing: hong qi chu ban she, 1997).

¹²² Lu Xueyi ed., *Report on Social Mobility in Contemporary China* (Beijing: shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2002).

¹²³ This was followed by the formal withdrawal of the "two estimations" policy.

¹²⁴ Wang Ke and Zhou Kunren, "Commemorating General Wang Ping, Our Old Political Commissar," *People's Daily*, June 03, 1998, <http://rmrbw.net/simple/index.php?t1176180.html>.

¹²⁵ In the report presented to the Party Center, Summary Report on Handling the Lingering Problems of the Anti-Rightists Movement (guanyu chuli fan youpai douzheng yiliu wenti gongzuo de zongjie baogao), rightists totaled 553,434, accounting for 5.7% of the nation's cadres or officials. "Rights" were not the only people purged. Other purged groups such as "central-rightists" (zhong you fenzi) totaled 216,000 and "anti-socialist elements" totaled 190,000. See Hu Zhi'an, "1978: From 'Hat-removal' To Rectification," *Chinese Newsweek*, January 22, 2013, <http://culture.inewsweek.cn/20130122/detail-5223-all.html>. The above figures are deemed accurate by the author because they came from an article written by Hu Zhi'an, sent by Ministry of Public Security, who worked for the Central Hat-removal Office for more than three years starting from May 1978. Hats-removal in the above context means removing the rightist labels. By mid-1980, 540,000 rights had cleared their names, accounting for 98% of the total rightists. See Wei Hongyun, "The Period of the Reform and Opening-up," from *guo shi ji shi ben mo (1949-1999)*, vol. 2 (Shenyang, Liaoning: Liaoning People's Publishing House, 2003), pp. 120.

¹²⁶ The 4.4 million who removed their "hats" or labels as landlord and "rich farmers" were only those who were still alive. After the land reform in 1951, those who were directly labeled as landlords and "rich farmers" totaled 20.25 million. Spouses and children of these people were treated under the same.

Therefore, those whose backgrounds were categorized as landlords and “rich farmers” totaled around 101.25 million. See Yan Lebin, “Subjects of Proletarian Dictatorship Before Reform and Opening-up,” *yanhuang chunqiu* magazine, Issue 8 of 2012, <http://www.hxzq.net/aspshow/showarticle.asp?id=9380>.

¹²⁷ Political campaigns which purged people under “landlords, rich farmers, counter-revolutionary, bad elements and rightists” totaled more than 30 million before the rectification. Families of those who fell under the above categories were often purged and attacked as well. See Dai Huang, *Hu Yaobang and Redressing Unjust, False And Wrong Cases* (Beijing: gongren chubanshe, 2004).

¹²⁸ See Chen Ziming, “The April 5th Incident in Broad Historic Perspectives,” in Chen Ziming et al., eds, *April 5th Movement: Turning Point of China’s 20th Century – Memory and Thinking After Thirty Years* (Hong Kong: bozhi chubanshe, 2006).

¹²⁹ “Practice Sets the Only Standard to Examine Truth,” *Guangming Daily*, May 11, 1978, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64165/79703/79789/5621047.html>.

¹³⁰ Notably, Deng’s supporters included CMC Secretary General Luo Ruiqing (reinstated in August of 1977 till his death in August 1978), his successor Geng Biao and General Wei Guoqing, Chief of General Politics (started in August 1977), as well as Zhao Cangbi, Minister of Public Security (started in March 1977).

¹³¹ Ni Chuanghui, Vol 1, 54-55.

¹³² Quan Yanchi, *Trapped Dragon and Miniature March* (Beijing: zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2000).

¹³³ Marshal Xu commented “don’t bully (Hua) too hard” during the ninth Politburo meetings to examine Hua’s faults in 1980. Hua formally resigned in October 1980, followed by the replacement of Marshal Xu by Geng Biao as Defense Minister in March 1981.

¹³⁴ Xu Xiangqian was one of the earliest opponents of the policy of “leaning one-sidedly to the US”, which was at odds with Deng’s thinking. Xu’s other position that the world war was unlikely, however, was adopted by Deng. Xu expressed his positions in Politburo meeting when Hua was still in power. Deng accepted Xu’s suggestion and revised China’s “leaning to one side (the US)” policy in 1985. Deng’s famous assertion that a world war was unlikely to happen originated from Xu Xiangqian’s thinking in late 1970s. See PLA NDU, *Biography of Xu Xiangqian*.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ On December 12, 1973, Mao openly criticized the way Zhou Enlai ran the Politburo and the CMC as “Politburo did not debate about politics and the CMC didn’t discuss military affairs” (政治局不议政，军委不议军). Mao then ordered commanders of eight military regions to be transferred with each other. Mao in the meanwhile nominated Deng Xiaoping to be the Chief of General Staff and a member of CMC. On January 18, 1974, a five-member CMC leadership team was established including Marshal Ye Jianying, Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao (Chief of General Politics Department), Deng Xiaoping and General Chen Xilian, in which only Ye stood firmly with Deng against the other three who were closer to the radical Gang of Four headed by Jiang Qing.

¹³⁷ See Deng Xiaoping, “The Army Must Be Put In Order,” a speech given on January 25, 1975, in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2 (1975-1982) (Beijing (People’s Press, 1994), pp. 1-3; Wang Xingsheng and Han Jinqiang, “Military Has To Act Like A Military,” *Guangming Daily*, August 20, 2014, pp. 14, http://epaper.gmw.cn/gmrb/html/2014-08/20/nw.D110000gmrb_20140820_1-14.htm;

¹³⁸ Hao Zhihui, *Deng Xiaoping’s Military Career* (Beijing: the PLA Press, 1996), pp. 159.

¹³⁹ Hao Zhihui, *Deng Xiaoping’s Military Career*, pp. 160.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Deng said, “how to put the military into order? How (the PLA) prepares to fight a war? How to consolidate the military? After solving these questions, we could then discuss the issue of military modernizations.” See *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2, pp. 59.

¹⁴² *Selected Military Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Academy of Military Sciences Press and zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2004), pp. 62.

¹⁴³ About 53.2% of officers at the army corps level and 46.7% of officers at division level were reshuffled in 1978. See The PLA military history drafting team, ed., *Chinese People’s Liberation Army History*, vol. 6 (May 1966-December 1978) (Beijing: Academy of Military Sciences Press, 2011), pp. 310.

¹⁴⁴ Han Huaizhi and Tan Jingqiao, *dangdai zhongguo jundui de junshi gongzuo* (Contemporary Chinese Military Affairs), Volume I (Taipei, Taiwan: Tianxia, 2000), pp. 659-660.

¹⁴⁵ The full-length quote of Liu Shaoqi is: “why the suppression of the counter-revolutionary movement could flourish in a big way? The key is that (we) have the Korean War! The Korean War is very good in many ways, making a lot of things easier for us to execute (such as the land reform, the Convention provides patriotism, production competition, counter-insurgency campaigns, etc.). Because the Korean War drums sounded and sounded so loud, our drums on the land reform drums and suppression of counter-revolutionaries thus could barely be heard. If there is no Korean War, then the drums on land reform and suppressions would sound out of control. For example, a landlord was killed here and another was killed there, and then tempest would arise and many things would be hard to execute.” See Report of Liu Shaoqi in the First All-China Propaganda Working Meeting, May 07, 1951. The suppression of counter-revolutionaries lasted from 1950 to 1953, “arresting 2,620,000 people, among whom 712,000 “counter-revolutionaries” were executed, more than 1,290,000 were imprisoned and 1,200,000 were restricted in terms of freedom of movement and 380,000 were released after ‘educations’.” See “Xu Zirong’s Statistical Report on Several Major Figures Since the Suppressions of Counter-revolutionary”, January 14, 1954, quoted in Yang Kuisong, “A Study in the Movement of Suppression of the Ant-Revolutionaries in the Early Period of PRC,” *shixue yanjiu*, Issue 1 of 2006, pp. 59.

¹⁴⁶ Li Danhui, a historian specialized in Cold War history, interviewed then Chinese Ambassador to Soviet Union (Ambassador Wang Youping, thought Wang’s name was not specified by Li Danhui), who explained his conclusion why he thought the Soviet Union would choose inaction. The ambassador said that “the Soviet side broke the thick ice in the rivers and lakes separating China and the Soviet Union” in January and February of 1979, which he believed sent the signal to Chinese that Soviet Union would not choose to intervene. See Dou Wentao, “Li Danhui: China’s Counter-attack against Vietnam Contributed to China’s Reform and Opening-up,” the show of “trilateral dialogues” in Phoenix Satellite TV, September 7, 2013.

¹⁴⁷ Li Xiannian once said (in a joking way) that when China was providing aid to Vietnam, Premier Zhou Enlai gave him a “position”: “minister of aid to Vietnam.” Therefore, Li was responsible for aid to Vietnam before 1970. See Liu Shuqing, “Li Xiannian in Foreign Affairs,” *bai nian chao*, issue 12 of 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Li enunciated comprehensively Chinese viewpoints about the tensions with Vietnam, accusing Vietnam of “in the past acknowledging both the Spratly and Paracel Islands as Chinese territories but revising positions after 1974” and “taking advantage of the opportunity to liberate the South in 1975 and occupying six islands of the Spratlys”. See Memorandum on Discussions of Vice Premier Li Xiannian and Premier Pham Van Dong on 10 June 1977, *People’s Daily*, March 23, 1979.

¹⁴⁹ Sun Lizhou, “Flip-flop Vietnam,” *Global Times*, July 18, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Hua Guofeng advocated a reckless leftist approach to growth with outdated Maoist, which was later criticized as “the Leap Outward” policy. Essentially, it was a state-led, investment-driven program, with a focus on heavy industry; it is a good example of what economists called “big-push industrialization.” See Ronald Coase and Ning Wang, *How China Became Capitalist*, CATO Policy Report, January/February 2013, <http://www.cato.org/policy-report/januaryfebruary-2013/how-china-became-capitalist>.

¹⁵¹ General Liu Yazhou’s talk in the meeting in Kunming, <http://www.junmiba.com/lunti/guangcha/20131014/42880.html>.

¹⁵² Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, pp.527-9.

¹⁵³ There were debates within the PLA about the goal of the war. Xu Shiyu believed that after the PLA took Hanoi it should terminate the war. Deng, however, shot down this idea based on Chen Yun’s recommendation by further limiting the war’s scope. As long as the war could be kept limited in duration and scale, Deng was confident that China could keep the Soviet Union out. See Zhu Jiamu, *Chen Yun Nianpu (A Chronicle of Chen Yun’s Life, 1905-1995) Vol.2* (Beijing: Central Document Press, 2000), 235-36.

¹⁵⁴ The interviewee said, “At that time, Deng had absolute control over the military, so the PLA would just execute the order to fight a war.” Interview with a senior retired diplomat, January 26, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with multiple retired and current MFA diplomats who had experiences or still work on Asian affairs, 2013-2014.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Interview with a MFA diplomat who was stationed in Thailand in the past and was familiar with MFA’s assessment of Thailand’s security situation in 1978-79, 2013.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with a retired MFA diplomat, 2013. Huang Hua made these comments when he visited Thailand in November 1978. See Foreign Minister Huang Hua's Visits, *People's Daily*, November 8, 1978, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Chen, *China's War with Vietnam*, pp. 70.

¹⁶² Hong Xuezhong, *Hong Xuezhong's Memoir* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2002), pp. 693-695.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), p. 41.

¹⁶⁵ Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with an active-duty military historian, 2013.

¹⁶⁷ Despite President Jimmy Carter's note attempting to dissuade Deng from starting this war, Deng still believed that the U.S. government spoke very differently in public and in private. In his opinion, the Carter administration viewed this war as an important element of the strategy to contain the Soviet Union, which the U.S. and China could work together to pursue. Thus, Deng believed that Carter's letter was just a way for the President to cover himself politically, but that in reality Carter would support the war. This conclusion was made based on the author's interview with a highly-placed PLA military historian in 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping*.

¹⁶⁹ Deng spoke of these words to Li Shenzhi, a renowned liberal thinker and former secretary of Zhou Enlai. See Gao Jianguo, "Commemorating Mr. Li Shenzhi," *Tong Zhou Gong Jin Magazine*, Issue 6 of 2003; Yuan Ming, "Culture of the United States," *Journal of China University of Political science and Law* 2 (2007).

¹⁷⁰ The interview with a PLA military historian was conducted by the author in October 2013. Moreover, one of Deng's former interpreters explained that Deng had a tendency to focus only on short-term problems and solutions. Interview with a former interpreter of Deng Xiaoping, 2013.

¹⁷¹ Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping*.

¹⁷² Deng's estimate about potential American subsidy to China (if China entered the war with Vietnam) was 150 billion dollars and another 50-60 billion dollars of aid from Europe, according to the print-outs sent to even lower-level PLA officers. Interview with an active-duty PLA historian who went through the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border war, October 2013.

¹⁷³ General Liu Yazhou explained Deng's motivation to launch the 1979 attack in a 2002 talk. General Liu believed that Deng had a strategic vision and both domestic and international reasons to fight this war. In his evaluation, Deng achieved what he hoped for with this war. Below is the excerpt of the relevant paragraphs. "Many of our comrades haven't recognized the meaning of this (1979) war... The meaning of the war is beyond this war. Comrade Xiaoping fought this war to show to two groups of people: CCP and Yankees... Comrade Xiaoping visited the US in January (1979) and launched the war in February. Politically, it is an inevitable war. Why? As soon as he returned to work, he had in his mind the blueprint for China's reform and opening up. However, to realize this blueprint, he needed to establish absolute authority in the Party. A war had to be fought. At the time, Gang of Four were just eliminated and leftists were plenty in the Party, who opposed both Deng and Deng's line and policies. To reform, one has to have authority. The quickest way to establish authority is to fight a war. ... Many at the time opposed the war, believing the PLA could not fight after the Cultural Revolution. However, Deng Xiaoping made up his mind and ignored all the oppositions... Second, (the war was fought to show) Americans. It was even more meaningful. ... In 1975, Americans dragged themselves out of Vietnam after suffering a great loss. Comrade Xiaoping said we need to teach a lesson to Vietnam. Who Vietnam was following then? The Soviet Union. By launching the counterattack against Vietnam, Comrade Xiaoping divided China from the so-called socialist camp. ... Comrade Xiaoping already saw it in 1979 that the fake socialism had no life, which was demonstrated in 1989. ... Comrade Xiaoping fought the war not only for Americans, but for us and China's reform and opening up. China's reform and opening up wasn't possible without the help of western countries. After this war was fought, Economic, technological and scientific aid, including military aid and funding, flooded from the US to China. China and the United States enjoyed a 10-year honeymoon, which was only ended on 4 June 1989. What did the war bring to China? It brought China enormous time, enormous funding and enormous technology, all of which ensured that China was still standing after the collapse of Soviet Union and disintegration of the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe... The first step of

China's reform and opening was started with this war," said Liu Yazhou. See General Liu Yazhou's talk when meeting officers of battalion level and above in Kunming, 2002, <http://www.junmiba.com/lunti/guangcha/20131014/42880.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Luo Jinyi and Zheng Yushuo, *Thirty Years of China's Reform and Opening-up: Change and Continuity* (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2009), pp. 42-43.

¹⁷⁵ Deng Xiaoping, Deng Xiaoping's talk on the battle briefing on the Sino-Vietnam Border War (*zhongyue bianjing zuozhan qingkong baogaohui*) on March 16, 1973.

¹⁷⁶ Ni Chuanghui, *Ten-year Sino-Vietnam War*, pp. 84.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with a senior MFA diplomat specialized in Asian affairs, 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Chronology of the 63rd Corps; Chronology of the 16th Corps.

¹⁷⁹ In Chen's speech, he raised "six important issues," which included criticisms of wrongly disgracing Peng Dehuai, Bo Yibo, and Tao Zhu, and the call to rectify the April 5th Tian'anmen Incident. Chen also raised Kang Sheng's errors, with the aim of undermining Hua's leftist supporters.

Chapter Eight: Timetable Strategy and China's Taiwan Policy Following the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis

Since 1949, the PLA has been obsessed with and driven by a single mission: taking back Taiwan. This preoccupation stems from China's deep-seated, historic anguish over its catastrophic defeat by Japan in 1895, which led to Japan's occupation and colonization of Taiwan from 1895-1945. Additionally, Taiwan's separation from the mainland is a constant reminder to China that its civil war remains unfinished. This case study examines the failure of the "timetable" strategy that emerged as a response to the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis. According to this strategy, China would set a timetable for the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. This strategy would have inherently made it more likely that the Taiwan problem would be solved by compellence, coercion, and even the use of force.

The reasons for conducting such a case study are as follows: First, it is not only important to examine policies that lead to actions such as wars, but it is also equally important why, in compelling circumstances, the decision is made not to go to war. Second, the centrality of Taiwan to China's national security interests is unlikely to change, which means that during times of crisis the possibility of war remains. As Shen Dingli, a professor at Fudan University, astutely points out, "any (PRC) regime that loses Taiwan on its watch would lose its legitimacy of existence."¹ Thus, China's leaders will continue to focus on Taiwan, until Taiwan reunites with China or China fundamentally changes its defense calculus on Taiwan. Third, Taiwan remains the single most volatile

issue that could lead to armed conflict between China and the U.S.² Fourth, in this case, the PLA strongly disagreed with multiple, non-military actors in the policy process, and therefore this case study sheds light on a situation in which the highly-motivated PLA faces a group of strong opponents in the policy process.

This chapter will briefly sketch and analyze the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, but will focus more on the policy-making process following this crisis, which led to China revising its Taiwan policy in 2003-05. Tensions across the Taiwan Strait eventually eased in 2008, when Ma Ying-jeou of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang / KMT) was elected as Taiwan's President. The central question is why the timetable approach failed to dominate China's Taiwan policy during this period.

Context: The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis

The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis stemmed from China's deepening suspicion of Lee Teng-hui's pro-independence leanings and its fear that as the Sino-U.S. relationship deteriorated and the U.S. imposed sanctions against China in response to the Tiananmen massacre, the U.S. might revise its one-China policy.

Chronology of events

Two factors were the primary catalysts for the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis: Beijing's unfamiliarity with how to handle and respond to the vibrant local politics of a democratic Taiwan; and Beijing's fundamental worry that following the end of the Cold War the U.S. might pursue a containment strategy against China and thus change the trajectory of Washington's Taiwan policy.³

The Tiananmen Incident provided abundant evidence of Beijing's clumsiness in dealing with populist movements or democratic politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Beijing had never before dealt with an unconventional figure like Lee Teng-hui, who was able to skillfully direct and leverage local populist movement.

Beijing and Taipei maintained secret dialogues from 1990-92, which gave Beijing some false sense of hope that the cross-Strait relationship was in a state of *détente*.⁴ The talks were conducted through a semi-governmental channel, led on Taiwan's side by the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and on China's side by the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). These discussions resulted in the "92 Consensus," formulated in August 1992, which explicitly acknowledged the "One China" principle, and as such both sides recognize there is only one China though they "agree to differ on its definition."⁵ While Beijing interprets the "92 Consensus" as an agreement by both sides to follow a "One China" policy, Taiwan reads it as "one China, respective interpretations."⁶ As part of this agreement, Taipei believed that "Taiwan and the mainland are both parts of China," therefore emphasizing equality; in contrast, Beijing believed that "Taiwan is a part of China," which means that Taiwan is subordinate to the PRC.⁷

With this vague but nonetheless groundbreaking consensus serving as a foundation, the "Wang-Koo talks" were held in 1993 in Singapore. Despite the positive trajectory of cross-Strait relations, Lee Teng-hui's position on negotiations gradually shifted in 1993 as he consolidated his presidency and political power.⁸ Beijing suspected that Lee raised "unrealistic" preconditions in order to put the carriage before the horse while earning international sympathy. The alarm was sounded for China when Lee called

the mainland government “gangsters” amid Taiwan’s anger toward Beijing for its lack of transparency in handling the Qiandaoahu tragedy of March 1993.⁹ Lee, in his April 1994 interview with renowned Japanese journalist Shiba Ryotaro, likened himself to Moses, as he would “lead Taiwan out of a repressive past.”¹⁰ This made China doubt Lee’s sincerity in negotiating a resolution to the Taiwan issue and suspect that Lee really intended to lead Taiwan toward *de jure* independence.

In January 1995, Jiang Zemin’s “Eight-point Initiative” was publicized, which presented, or at least was designed to present, a much more flexible and conciliatory posture toward Taiwan by emphasizing, “Chinese won’t fight Chinese.”¹¹ This public position paper should be examined along with the three proposals that mainland envoys made when sharing information on the “Jiang Zemin Eight Points” prior to its announcement. The “Three Ceasings” agreement proposed by Beijing included: ceasing military confrontation, ceasing all hostile activities, and ceasing all activities and remarks that endanger cross-Straits relations and unification, as well as initiating political party-to-party talks on unification.¹² As part of this initiative, Jiang revealed his desire to meet Lee either in Beijing or Taipei, which reflected Beijing’s principle that “Chinese affairs shall be left to Chinese themselves.”¹³ Two weeks later, Lee sent a secret envoy to meet with Xing Kuishan, one of the drafters of Jiang’s Eight-point Initiative, in order to understand the essence of Jiang’s proposals.¹⁴ As Prime Minister Hau Pei-Tsun resigned in early 1993 and Lee’s series of reforms continuously weakened the power of mainland-born Taiwanese, Lee strengthened his control over the KMT and then quietly but methodically pursued independence for Taiwan.¹⁵ Beijing began to counterattack as Lee vigorously took steps to expand Taiwan’s international space. Lee essentially rebuffed

Jiang's proposal by insisting on meeting Jiang during "an international occasion" such as APEC, which the mainland found hard to accept.

The end of the Cold War, which eliminated the strategic basis for the Sino-U.S. relationship, combined with the Tiananmen crackdown, meant that the Sino-U.S. relationship was in a free fall. Washington's China policy was recalibrated and became increasingly politicized. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan, which China asserted violated the 1982 U.S.-China Communiqué, in which the U.S. promised to reduce the quantity of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Two years later, the Clinton administration revised the government's policy and raised the protocol level for U.S. treatment of Taiwan's officials. As a result of these policy shifts, Su Chi, the former Secretary-General of Taiwan's National Security Council, accurately described the U.S. as "the most important third party" in the middle of an increasingly intense cross-Strait standoff.¹⁶ With the blossoming of Taiwan's democracy and Lee's skillful manipulation of American democratic politics by dramatizing his transit through Hawaii in May 1994,¹⁷ new actors and agendas were suddenly inserted into what was previously "a simple power struggle."¹⁸ Therefore, the changing cross-Strait relationship led to greater uncertainty and levied tremendous pressure on China's fragile post-Deng decision-making system.

During the 1995 crisis, the U.S.'s role was central to Beijing's calculus, even though the visible confrontations occurred between Beijing and Taipei. According to Beijing's flawed storyline, President Clinton granted a visa to Lee Teng-hui despite the State Department's repeated assurances to Beijing that the U.S. would not do so. The reality, however, is that in April 1995, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher sent a

subtle warning of the impending danger to Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. Christopher pointed out that a visa for Lee would be “inconsistent with (the United States’) unofficial relationship” with Taiwan. Qian interpreted Christopher’s message as an assurance, although it was intended to be read as a warning. Either Qian didn’t grasp the subtle message or he did not want to deliver this bad news to China’s leadership.¹⁹ When in May the Senate voted 97-1 and the House of Representatives 360-0 in favor of granting a visa to Lee and President Clinton did not veto the bill, this came as a shock to many in Beijing. Beijing’s belief about the seriousness of this action, however, was reasonable, since the U.S. government had not allowed Taiwan’s president to visit the U.S. since President Nixon’s 1972 visit to China.

Lee’s inflammatory speech, “*The Longing of the People is Always in My Heart*,” at his alma mater, Cornell University, which called for a more independent role for Taiwan in international politics, was the last straw for Beijing. Lee’s talk confirmed the beliefs of many in China that Lee wanted nothing but independence for Taiwan and that the U.S. was encouraging and supporting Lee as he took steps down the road to independence. After diplomats made the mistake in judging that the U.S. would not grant Lee a visa, the MFA no longer had the credibility to advise the top leadership on Taiwan. The PLA stepped into the void created by the MFA’s failure. From July 21-28 1995, the PLA launched six surface-to-surface missiles that landed in waters approximately 100 miles from Taiwan. A few days after China’s military exercise, Taiwan conducted its own missile and naval exercises, and it announced its intention to conduct live artillery tests in August. Taiwan’s defiance led to China’s second round of missile tests and its live artillery naval exercises near Taiwan, which were held from August 15-25.

The 1995 missile tests and other punitive economic and diplomatic measures Beijing launched did not seem to immediately impact U.S. policy. President Clinton sent a secret letter to Jiang in August, but then met with the Dalai Lama at the White House in September.²⁰ In an October 1995 meeting between Xiong Guangkai and Chas Freeman, then Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, one PLA officer implicitly threatened that China would use nuclear weapons against the U.S. during a Taiwan contingency, saying, “you will not sacrifice Los Angeles to protect Taiwan.”²¹ Freeman also learned as early as October 1995 that Beijing would carry out military exercises in 1996, during Taiwan’s presidential election.²²

In November 1995, Beijing announced another round of exercises for the spring of 1996, prior to and coinciding with Taiwan’s three-week presidential campaign period, when Lee would run for a second term. After one month of deployments, the PLA had amassed 150,000 troops and 300 planes in Fujian Province, which lies directly opposite Taiwan. On December 19, the U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz quietly passed through the Taiwan Strait, the first such transit by a U.S. aircraft carrier since the normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979. The Nimitz’s passage wasn’t publicly announced until late January, when Taiwan revealed it.

On March 7, 1996, the PLA fired three M-9 missiles into the waters just off the coast of Taiwan’s two largest port cities, one of which landed barely twenty miles from the northern port of Keelung. On March 13, China launched a fourth M-9 missile. Two days later, China announced that from March 18-25 the PLA would conduct joint air, ground, and naval exercises near Pingtan Island, which would take place within ten nautical miles of Taiwan-controlled islands.

In response, Washington ordered that the Independence carrier battle group move from Okinawa to the waters east of Taiwan, and that the Nimitz carrier battle group travel from the Persian Gulf to Taiwan's vicinity. On March 23, Lee Teng-hui won Taiwan's presidential election by a landslide, proving that the PLA's attempts to intimidate Taiwan were ineffective and even counterproductive. Another consequence of the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis is that the PLA tested and found out the U.S.'s bottom line. The U.S. aircraft carriers left Taiwan's vicinity on March 25.

The PLA's military exercises in 1995-96, and arguably its subsequent military maneuvers aimed at Taiwan in 2000 and 2004, were primarily preventive actions intended to dissuade Taiwan from declaring *de jure* independence. These actions also hedged against a potential declaration of independence: in the event that Taiwan suddenly declared its independence during the nationalist fervor surrounding its presidential elections, the PLA at least had troops in place.²³ Scholarly analyses have mostly concluded that Beijing was applying coercive diplomacy during the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis. Robert Ross believes "the use of force was a crucial element in Beijing's coercive diplomacy. China's large-scale military exercises and missile tests were intended to signal to the United States and Taiwan the tremendous risks inherent in their policies."²⁴ However, it is plausible that, with Jiang's effective control over the PLA not yet fully consolidated, Beijing's decision-making process during this crisis was not as united in choosing coercive diplomacy. In recent years, unofficial histories of the crisis have begun to emerge, as memoirs and interviews are increasingly published. In these materials, some argue that the PLA's 1996 exercises were originally planned to be much more aggressive, as they were a cover for a genuine military operation to seize Taiwan's

offshore islands and thereby punish Lee.²⁵ Although these rather interesting accounts may shed some light on the PLA's decision-making in 1995-96, one cannot yet confirm their credibility by checking them against multiple sources on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Perfect Storm – Analysis from the Angle of Domestic Politics

China's domestic politics drove the decision to escalate the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis. Following Yang Shangkun's (the CMC Vice Chairman who headed the TALSG) downfall, the PLA's leading role in the secret envoy communications was largely reduced until 1992-93. Lee Teng-hui's visit to the U.S. and his provocative speech gave the PLA an opportunity to attack the MFA for its policy failure on Taiwan. By exerting influence over one decision, in this instance the choice to respond to Lee's visit by escalating tensions, the PLA intended to assume more influence over China's broader Taiwan policy.

Beijing and Taipei, through three years of secret contacts between February 1988 and December 1990, set the stage for secret-envoy communications in Hong Kong.²⁶ The PLA leadership in fact initiated and led these backdoor channels from 1990-92.²⁷ These secret talks between Taiwan and China started in December 1990 in the Hong Kong residency of Nan Huai-chin, a well-respected Zen master with deep connections in both Taiwan and China.²⁸ Through this backdoor channel, Taiwan gave Beijing early warning of the United States' impending 1992 F-16 sales to Taiwan and Lee Teng-hui's 1995 visit to the U.S. When Tseng Yung-hsien, Lee's secret envoy, privately asked about Beijing's possible response to the upcoming F-16 sales, Yang Shangkun expressed both his

understanding and the necessity of a harsh public response from Beijing due to domestic politics. He allegedly calmly replied, “due criticism (from our side) will have to come.”²⁹ However, with Yang’s political downfall, Taiwan affairs were transferred to Jiang Zemin and his close associate, Zeng Qinghong.³⁰ As a result, the PLA’s role in this channel was greatly diminished.

These secret communications gave Beijing a sense of hope for a historic *détente* between both sides of the Strait and incentivized China to be more tolerant toward and understanding of Taiwan. The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, however, shattered this illusion.³¹ During a March 1995 meeting, Su Chih-ch’eng informed Zeng Qinghong that Lee Teng-hui would soon visit the Middle East and the U.S., and conveyed Lee’s hope that Beijing would understand.³² Zeng, however, did not express any opinion on the spot. Therefore, Jiang and Lee reached a tacit agreement, at least from the Taiwanese envoy’s perspective, on the original plan of “launching name-calling games as a public play” (*ge ma ge de*), according to Su.³³ This explained the business-as-usual visit by Tang Shubei, Vice Chairman of ARATS, on May 26 to prepare for the second Wang-Ku meeting, despite the U.S. announcement that it would grant Lee a visa.³⁴ When asked to comment on Lee’s visit to the U.S., Tang said he was fully authorized to prepare for the second Wang-Ku meeting and that Lee’s visit should not affect communications and interactions between ARATS and its Taiwanese counterpart.³⁵ This begs the question: what in the policy-making process had changed in the lead-up to the crisis? The answer lies in the PLA and its influence on Jiang during the crisis.

Between 1988 and 1990, the PLA’s assessment of Lee’s intentions was quite benign, as it believed Lee had basically inherited Chiang Ching-kuo’s guidelines

regarding the “One China policy” and would continue to open up Taiwan to the mainland economically, through people-to-people exchanges, and even politically.³⁶ The PLA’s view of Lee became even more positive from 1991-93, as it concluded that the KMT under Lee “has made the (unprecedentedly) greatest progress in Taiwan’s policy toward mainland.”³⁷ By early 1994, however, the PLA had reversed course, coming to the conclusion based on Lee’s name-calling in the wake of the Qiandaohu Incident that he was not exerting a positive influence on cross-Straits relations.³⁸

In contrast, those civilian agencies whose portfolios included Taiwan affairs, led by the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) and ARATS, focused their attention and efforts on pushing forward cross-Straits negotiations on personnel exchanges, communications, and trade. Despite the aforementioned negative developments, ARATS met with its Taiwanese counterpart three times in 1994 and was prepared to hold the second Wang-Ku meeting in Taiwan in 1995.³⁹ In July 1994, Tang Shubei promised that Beijing was willing to negotiate with Taipei on “ending hostility” and signing a peace treaty, as long as the Taiwanese government adhered to the “one China principle.”⁴⁰ Just three months before the 1995 crisis, Wang Daohan, the Chairman of ARATS, was still stating publicly that Beijing and Taipei would hold talks over “ending hostility,”⁴¹ a proposal that encroached on the PLA’s territory.⁴²

In 1994-95, the PLA and the civilian bureaucracies increasingly diverged over Beijing’s Taiwan policy, as they disagreed over their assessment of Lee’s intentions and how to respond to the “Taiwan independence force.”⁴³ The PLA in general was not happy with what it perceived to be the MFA’s weak punitive measures that it imposed in 1995. The PLA’s own assessment of Lee became negative at the end of 1993.⁴⁴ The

PLA's objections to Lee's visit masked its deeper dissatisfaction with its own plight. One senior PLA officer described the PLA as an "underdog" military (*ai bing*), given its low defense budget and the resulting deterioration of soldiers' well-being and morale, as well as its diminished role in Taiwan policy-making.

In 1995, a series of incidents laid the groundwork for a perfect storm by weakening Jiang and the civilian foreign affairs system prior to Lee's visit to the U.S. First, Deng Rong, Deng's daughter, revealed to the media in early 1995 that Deng's health had deteriorated, and he was gravely ill and unable to walk.⁴⁵ This was followed by Chen Yun's death in April. The implication was that a strong, authoritative voice of moderation would not intervene during a grave crisis. Second, Jiang delivered the moderate "Eight Points" in early 1995, on the advice of his political mentor, Wang Daohan, but the U.S. still granted Lee a visa. This was a huge diplomatic debacle for Qian and the MFA. Many believed that Jiang held out an olive branch, only to be humiliated by the U.S. and Lee.⁴⁶ Third, Clinton personally snubbed Jiang in May 1995. The MFA, on behalf of Jiang, tried for months to set up a meeting with President Clinton, as both Jiang and Clinton had both been invited to Moscow to commemorate World War II.⁴⁷ Jiang's request was rebuffed.⁴⁸ A *New York Times* editorial on May 10 added salt to Jiang's wounds, explaining that Clinton declined a private meeting with Jiang because he did not want to influence "China's succession politics" by conferring upon Jiang the prestige a world leader would have been accorded.⁴⁹ In other words, Clinton didn't view Jiang as a world leader yet. Lee's speech at Cornell was the last straw, initiating a response from infuriated officers in the PLA who tried to put all the blame on Jiang, who was still vulnerable in Chinese politics. Despite a major victory in April 1995 with the

unseating of Chen Xitong, his major political opponent, Jiang was again put in a dangerous position because his political control and domestic credibility would have been undermined if domestic opponents perceived him to be weak on core security issues.

The PLA built a strong internal consensus in 1995 that China should take a tough stance toward Taiwan. Despite decade-long budget cuts and low morale, especially after 1989, a group of junior to mid-level PLA officers, termed the PLA's "young turks," rallied behind a cause for which the PLA could stand tall. Members of the Nanjing Military Region (NMR), in particular, were particularly motivated to push the leadership toward military action because of their military beliefs, personal ambition, and the sense that they would play a prominent role in any war over Taiwan. The NMR's younger officers, traditionally in charge of preparing for a war over Taiwan, as well as those from the Jinan and Guangzhou Military Regions, created a slogan in 1995-96 that read, "the war with Taiwan shall be initiated by us (China), the first war against Taiwan will be fought by us, and the first war on Taiwan will be won swiftly" (*shouzhān yǒuwō, shouzhān yǒngwō, shouzhān gāojié*).⁵⁰ With this slogan, younger and relatively junior PLA officers motivated a large segment of senior PLA officers to support the use of force against Taiwan. First-generation revolutionaries, led by Zhang Aiping, Ye Fei and, possibly, Zhang Zhen, who was then the CMC Vice Chairman, backed up these "young turks" in the PLA, because of their personal roles in the PLA's preparations for war with Taiwan.⁵¹ Despite Zhang Aiping's long hiatus after 1989 due to his dissent over the Tiananmen crackdown, Zhang in 1995 lambasted the U.S. for supporting Lee Teng-hui's attempt to separate Taiwan from China.⁵²

Michael Swaine has written that Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen's strong positions necessitated the need for a significant military dimension to any response, possibly including missile "tests."⁵³ This may well be true, given Zhang Zhen's experience drafting war plans against Taiwan in 1954 and Liu Huaqing's own account as to why he was so driven to build aircraft carriers. Liu listed Taiwan and the 1993 Yinhe Incident as the two drivers that were motivating him to push for China's aircraft carrier program. In August 1995, Liu called for "completion of reunification of the motherland" by "forging the third Kuomintang-Communist Cooperation" on reunification of China, which pulled mainland's position back to Ye Jianying's nine peace proposals (also called "Ye's Nine Proposals") that were introduced in 1981, an evident negation and public snub of Jiang's proposal.⁵⁴ There is some evidence that Liu and Zhang, together with Xiong Guangkai, confronted Jiang, Qian Qichen and Wang Daohan during a TALSG meeting in mid-June 1995.⁵⁵ Liu was especially bitter about this incident, as Jiang did not accept his proposals to aggressively modernize the PLA Navy, including building its first aircraft carrier, which led to the dilemma China faced in 1995.⁵⁶ In his memoir, Liu did not touch upon his role in the 1995-96 crisis, which indicates that either whatever Liu advised, he was not as fully engaged and effective as he wanted to be during the decision-making process, or that what he would have written was censored.

The PLA officers who played the most influential role in the decision-making and implementation process during the crisis were most likely Zhang Zhen and Zhang Wannian. General Zhang Zhen, who Deng assigned, along with Liu Huaqing, to "assist" Jiang, maintained a relatively smooth relationship with Jiang during this period. Zhang, who headed the GSD's Operations Department during the 1950s and played a major role

in designing the PLA's actions against Taiwan during the first Taiwan Strait crisis, provided strategic guidance during the phase of military planning in 1995-96.⁵⁷ Zhang Wannian, then Chief of General Staff (1992-96) and a former commander of the Guangzhou Military Region (1987-90), consistently and ardently advocated shifting the PLA's focus of military preparations to the coastal regions of Southeast China.⁵⁸ He wrote in his memoir that he took instructions directly from Jiang throughout the 1995-96 crisis, after initially informing Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen of the latest developments.

Following the 1995-96 crisis, the PLA was the principal beneficiary in domestic politics. First, the crisis revealed that Deng's guideline of "the PLA must refrain" (*jundui yao rennai*), which posited that the PLA's needs should be put on the backburner, was no longer tenable, and that the PLA's budget needed to increase. China's defense budget increased by 165 percent (\$25.5 billion) between 1996 and 2005, while the U.S. defense budget increased by 50 percent (\$160 billion) during the same period, according to SIPRI.⁵⁹ China's military burden – its share of military expenditures as a percentage of GDP – increased from 1.8 percent in 1996 to 2.1 percent in 2004, a figure that remains almost the same through 2013.⁶⁰ Additionally, following the crisis, the PLA's influence over the decision-making process regarding Taiwan policy increased.⁶¹ For instance, in 2000, Zhang Wannian, then CMC Vice Chairman, joined the TALSG.

Another major consequence of the 1995-96 crisis in terms of China's domestic politics is that Jiang learned and even over-learned the lesson that he had to be tough on Taiwan in order to both win over and control the PLA. Jiang, arguably, also politically benefitted from the 1995-96 crisis, as it allowed him to consolidate and expand his power base in the PLA. Although initially in 1995 the PLA exerted influence over Jiang, Jiang

began to embrace the PLA's populist calls on Taiwan and became the final arbiter during the decision-making process. China's tough response in 1995 won Jiang popular support domestically, particularly from within the PLA. An astute politician, Jiang learned his lesson: to win over the PLA's officers and grow deep roots in the PLA, he needed to take on their cause. In 1996, Jiang abandoned his politically defensive posture and took the full initiative in handling the crisis.⁶² Jiang indicated in a meeting with Japanese visitors that he ordered for the missile firings to continue, even after the U.S. sent its aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in 1996.⁶³ Jiang's claim during this meeting rings true, since it is likely that professional officers would have thought twice and hesitated during such circumstances. The PLA may have forced Jiang's hand at the outset of the crisis, but by the end of it, he emerged politically stronger, with closer ties to the PLA.

The Timetable Strategy

The "unification timetable" strategy was floated and debated repeatedly throughout the 1990s, but has never been publicly formulated or articulated as China's official Taiwan policy. According to the "timetable" strategy, China would set a timetable for the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. This strategy, by default, makes it more likely that the Taiwan problem would be solved through compellence, coercion, and even the use of force. This is because, given the natural trajectory of development, Taiwan would be unlikely to follow the timeline, and in order to meet its stated objectives China would have no choice but to force Taiwan to the table.

Deng's ideas were the progenitor of and inspiration behind the timetable strategy. During a speech at the Third Plenary Session of the Central Advisory Commission of the

CCP in October 1984, Deng first stressed that China needed to be patient when dealing with the Taiwan issue, but then implied that China would be open to using force if Taiwan refused to negotiate with China indefinitely.⁶⁴ Deng, however, did not define how many years he considered to be “indefinite” before the use of force would be justified. Deng himself put forward reunification with Taiwan as one of China’s core tasks for the 1980s, but as he realized this was an impossible objective to realize, Deng, a nimble statesman with unquestionable authority, chose to push it off until later.

The exact moment when this strategy formally emerged is unclear. It first appeared in the public sphere when then Premier Li Peng denied the existence of a timetable strategy during a 1989 news conference.⁶⁵ Li explicitly stated, “on the question of whether (we) have a timetable for the reunification of the two sides across the Strait, I will reply with a ‘no,’ because we all are realists.”⁶⁶ Senior PLA officers interviewed indicated that in 1993 the timetable strategy was debated and presented internally. The importance of this idea was renewed when Jiang Zemin mentioned it explicitly in internal meetings in 1996 by claiming, “to solve the Taiwan problem, we may not be able to do it in five years. But ten years are plenty for it!” (*wunian buxing, shinian zongkeyiba*).⁶⁷ In January 1996, Prime Minister Li Peng, flanked by Liu Huaqing, publicly stated, “unification can no longer be delayed indefinitely,” which became almost the code word for the timetable strategy.⁶⁸ The MFA spokesman, Chen Jian, then stated, “the settlement of the question of Taiwan and the accomplishment of the reunification of the motherland will be on the top of the agenda.”⁶⁹ Departing from his previous public position that he adopted in 1989,⁷⁰ Li also urged that the timetable strategy be adopted in the closed-door All-China Taiwan Affairs Office Director Meeting in 1998.⁷¹

For most of the 1990s, the timetable strategy remained “a controversial internal idea, an investigative concept” (*tantaoxing tifa*).⁷² This changed in June 1998, when Jiang, during a meeting with President Clinton, publicly emphasized for the first time the necessity of imposing the timetable strategy. Jiang stated, “frankly speaking, the Taiwan problem must have a timetable as it cannot drag on forever.”⁷³ Two months later, Jiang reiterated the need to settle the reunification issue within a certain time frame in an interview with an American journalist.⁷⁴ In October 1998, Jiang reiterated during the closing meeting of the Third Plenum of the 15th Party Congress that “there must be a timetable” for the completion of unification, though Jiang’s speech was not released until 2006.⁷⁵ Chen Yunlin, then head of the Taiwan Affairs Office, also fell in line by writing in the *People’s Daily* in January 1999, “the problem of the realization of the complete unification of the motherland cannot be delayed indefinitely.”⁷⁶ Jiang stressed during a March 1999 interview with a Hong Kong reporter, “our desire to realize the complete unification of the motherland is urgent.”⁷⁷ A *People’s Daily* editorial published that same month posited, “Based on political as well as strategic considerations, we propose that there be a timetable for the resolution of the Taiwan problem. It cannot be dragged out indefinitely.”⁷⁸ An editorial in the *People’s Daily* in 2000 again claimed that China could not tolerate “the endless delay of (solving) the Taiwan problem.”⁷⁹

Non-Chinese scholars believe this strategy was introduced and adopted later. A Taiwanese scholar asserted that the idea of imposing a timetable on the resolution of the Taiwan issue began floating around Beijing’s policy circles following Lee Teng-hui’s “special state-to-state relations” declaration in July 1999.⁸⁰ David M. Lampton has written that “Jiang entertained the idea of a ‘timeline’ for unification after Chen’s

election” in 2003.⁸¹ Having said that, the timetable strategy has never been officially adopted as a government strategy.⁸² A logical follow-up question is why this strategy was not pursued in the years following the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis.

The PLA’s Mindset During the 1990s

During the 1990s, the rise of professionally-oriented officers allowed the PLA to better define and more effectively pursue its institutional interests. Inspired by the United States’ demonstration of a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) during the 1991 Gulf War and driven by China’s rapidly expanding global economic interests, the PLA in 1993 officially shifted its strategic guideline to “winning a limited war under high technology.”⁸³ The PLA Navy also more aggressively broadened its focus beyond the near seas. The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis was, in many aspects, the rallying point for this shift in perspective. Taiwan is an issue of such importance that the PLA’s rank and file has the broadest consensus that it must be resolved (though, arguably, PLA officers are much more divided on how to accomplish this major mission). Additionally, as ideology faded with China’s continuous opening-up and the Tiananmen Incident, the Taiwan issue became the issue that motivated the PLA the most. As a major combat mission, the Taiwan issue forces the PLA to prepare for the worst – to fight a war against the best military in the world (the United States), which helps to promote professionalization. In other words, the Taiwan issue, which strongly motivates the PLA and it views as an internal concern, forces it to prepare for an external threat. The Taiwan issue is also a rallying point in terms of China’s civil-military relationship, as the PLA, which has blood on its hands following Tiananmen, hopes that by ably completing this

mission it can redeem itself and reconcile with Chinese society. The sustained crisis over Taiwan in the 1990s provided the PLA the best opportunity to prove its worth to the public while serving the PLA's case for an increased budget and resources, and for greater involvement in foreign and security policy-making.

Development of the PLA's Institutional Interest

The PLA, despite a short period of intensified politicization from 1989-92 led by Yang Baibing, accelerated the pace of modernization in the 1990s. The PLA's modernization coincided with the rise of a professionally-oriented officer corps. This era started with the promotion of two elderly but visionary officers, Admiral Liu Huaqing and General Zhang Zhen, who were both elevated after the Yang brothers' fall in 1992. For the first time since 1978, professionally-oriented officers rose to the top to run military affairs.

Since 1992, professionally-oriented officers have continually obtained significant leadership roles and have become increasingly significant in the decision-making process regarding the military's modernization. In the "bipolar" military leadership system regularized after 1992, characterized by two CMC Vice Chairmen, the Vice Chairman whose portfolio focuses on army-building (operations, training, and military planning) has always officially ranked ahead of the Vice Chairman who leads political work and makes personnel decisions. Having professional officers run the PLA has not only led to a sharp increase in military professionalization, but has also contributed to the expression and furtherance of the PLA's institutional interests: increased budget and resources, more

military (organizational and functional) autonomy in pursuing military modernization, and a heightened bureaucratic role in foreign and security policies.

Budget

The PLA was certainly concerned with its budgetary allocation during the 1990s. The PLA had to endure relatively low budgets throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, which frustrated professionally-oriented officers' ambitions to pursue military modernization, and led to low morale and a brain drain to booming civilian sectors.⁸⁴ Soldiers' welfare also notably deteriorated.⁸⁵ According to a survey conducted by the PLA Air Force in 1997 that covered ten provinces and regions, military pilots' income on average was less than one-tenth that of civilian pilots.⁸⁶ General Zhang Zhen and Admiral Liu Huaqing, as well as their followers, were acutely aware that China's greatest national priority was to pursue economic development, which forced China's leadership to neglect the PLA's well-being and its military modernization. Admiral Liu was especially frustrated over the lack of funding for advanced weapons systems. Admiral Liu repeatedly lobbied Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng, and Vice Premier Yao Yilin, as well as bureaucracies such as the State Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance, to increase the PLA's budget.⁸⁷ The PLA's budget temporarily went up after 1989, but went back down (when adjusted for inflation).⁸⁸ The bitter lesson the PLA took from the 1980s was that the leadership and public's attention is directly linked to the resources allocated to the PLA.

The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis revealed how close China was to having to fight a war, and how woefully unprepared the PLA was to fight such a war. General Zhang

Wannian tried to lobby the expanded meeting of Beidaihe in 1995 to change China's strategic focus from Deng Xiaoping's concept of "one center" (economic development) to "two centers" (economic development and military preparation).⁸⁹ Although Jiang Zemin and Li Peng shot down Zhang's idea and therefore it was never officially raised during the Beidaihe meeting, Jiang and Li conceded that the defense budget had to rise.⁹⁰

Military Modernization

The second major institutional interest the PLA tried to express in the 1990s was its goal of military modernization to meet the challenges posed by the RMA, and the necessity of military autonomy in order to achieve this goal. The steps the PLA took toward realizing this goal included revising its strategic guidelines, narrowing its activities to military training (away from engaging in the marketplace), and shifting its posture toward focusing on external threats (rather than internal stability maintenance).

Zhang Zhen was a major contributor to the formulation of the PLA's new strategic guidelines that were introduced in the 1990s, which redirected the PLA's training and education, as well as its organizational structure. In late 1991, in a meeting with the chiefs of the three general departments and the CMC members, Zhang proposed to revise the military's strategic guidelines to "winning a localized war under high and new technology."⁹¹ The CMC Executive Work Meeting studied Zhang's proposal and did not raise any objections. The PLA GSD adopted Zhang's operational concept in a formal proposal that it then submitted to the CMC in January 1993. Jiang Zemin then approved the guidelines and publicized them in an enlarged meeting of the CMC five months later.⁹² Liu Huaqing proposed a naval strategy of "active defense and war-fighting in near

seas” in 1983 and then developed it into an expansive strategy that would push the PLA Navy to: defend the “main war-fighting areas including the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and South China Sea”; possess the capability to fight wars in the near seas, including in the “Japanese Archipelago, Ryukyu Islands and the broad seas west of the Philippine Islands”; and effectively control important sea lanes of communications connected to Chinese oceanic territories. Liu’s naval strategy, which he drafted as early as 1986, is the first strategy designed by a service of the PLA.⁹³ Although Liu’s vision was not fully implemented in the 1990s, it deeply influenced future generations of PLA naval commanders.

The PLA’s exit from the marketplace in 1995-99 was driven by the convergence of interests among professionally-oriented PLA officers, who advocated ridding the PLA of corruption and increasing the defense budget, the government, which wanted to exert fuller control over the economy, and Jiang Zemin, who was motivated to seize more control over the PLA. Although many PLA officers criticized this process and questioned whether the PLA got a fair bargain,⁹⁴ visionaries such as Zhang Aiping, Liu Huaqing, and Zhang Zhen had called for this type of “surgery” for a long time, and it was generally in line with the PLA’s institutional interest.

Rise of the PLA’s professionalization

Compared to its performance over the three decades preceding the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, the pace of the PLA’s professionalization following the Crisis has been phenomenal.⁹⁵ Several factors contributed to the increased speed and scope of the PLA’s professionalization:

First, the PLA's commanders had completed a generational shift from the first-generation revolutionary soldiers-politicians to commanders with a purely military background. Almost every general promoted in 1993 and 1994 had fought in China's pre-1949 civil war. In contrast, all but one soldier who was promoted to the rank of full general since 1996 joined the PLA after 1949. Thus, almost every soldier promoted to general after 1996 first experienced combat during the Korean War, in which the PLA fought the most advanced adversary on the planet (the United States). Officers at lower ranks were not only younger, but were also more educated and received more specialized training than their older counterparts.⁹⁶

Second, the Tiananmen crackdown was extremely traumatic for the PLA. The PLA, which had branded itself as an army of "children of the people," was ordered to repress unarmed civilians and students. Reluctantly, the PLA followed its orders. As Michael Swaine points out, this incident "destabilized the military's relations with society and the party, its internal unity, its policy direction, its operational mission, and its overall modernization program."⁹⁷ While the PLA was still coping with the aftereffects of Tiananmen, the 1991 Gulf War, broadcast live on TV, sent shockwaves throughout the PLA. This war altered the nature of modern warfare with its display of high-paced air and armored operations, use of precision strike systems that struck deep behind the frontlines, and demonstration of the superior strength of joint operations. The PLA was taken aback by this display of force and technological and operational sophistication. While the Gulf War rekindled the PLA officer corps' enthusiasm for professionalization, it also developed a grave sense of crisis that if it did not act, the PLA would fall behind in the global competition for military modernization, fail to successfully defend China's

interests, and could even lose Taiwan. At the end of the Cold War, the PLA Navy's armaments and weaponry systems were comparable to the West's in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy was continuing to push ahead, developing highly efficient electronic naval warfare weapons that employed C3I, which integrated modern naval warfare with surveillance, control, communication and command.⁹⁸ The 1993 Yinhe Incident humiliated the PLA.⁹⁹ The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis forced the PLA to confront the real possibility that it would need to fight a war with the U.S.¹⁰⁰ The PLA believed that if it was to redirect itself to focus on an outside military threat, it needed to increase professionalization.

Third, the PLA needed specialized personnel to master the increasingly intricate and advanced armaments and command systems that it would need to adopt in order to respond to the RMA. Those with better education and training would have to be given more opportunities for promotion. Therefore, the increasing specialization and standardization of the military, driven by the requirements of the RMA, reinforced the trend of professionalization among the officer corps.

Finally, the power of the market drove the PLA toward greater professionalization. As China opens up to the world, becoming a soldier is only one of tens of thousands of options for a young person with a specialized skillset. In the past, Chinese joined the PLA out of a true sense of patriotism and a desire to protect their families and their country. There was also a sense of honor and pride in serving in the PLA. By the 1990s, however, well-qualified officers had much better career opportunities outside the military. The PLA could no longer attract new recruits by tapping into patriotism alone or employing the slogan of "protect your families, safeguard your motherland" (*baojia, weiguo*).¹⁰¹

Chinese had to weigh the costs and benefits of joining the military and viewed becoming a PLA officer as a profession. The opportunity cost of serving in the military, for well-educated and capable officers, was much higher in the 1990s than it was in previous decades, when serving in the PLA meant enjoying a better standard of living and other social privileges. In the 1990s, the income gap between PLA officers and those who worked in the booming private sector widened significantly. Therefore, if the PLA wanted to keep talented officers, it needed to follow the road of professionalization, while also maintaining the adequacy of military salaries.¹⁰²

Altered Threat Perception

The Chinese leadership's 1978 decision to shift the country's focus to economic development and reform and opening up was grounded in Deng Xiaoping's fundamental judgment that the international situation was one of peace and development, a conclusion that he made as early as 1975.¹⁰³ In March 1979, Deng restated his judgment that a world war would not be fought for at least the next decade.¹⁰⁴ Then, in an April 1980 meeting, Deng again stated, "dangers could pass in the 1980s and we believe that it is possible to get twenty years of a peaceful environment."¹⁰⁵ Based on his judgment that war was improbable in the near future, Deng could logically argue that China should reduce its military expenditures and put more resources into economic development. Deng made this argument as soon as he was elected Chairman of the CMC in 1981. As CMC Chairman, the first order he gave was to cut the military's budget by RMB 2.7 billion. Based on Deng's orders, the PLA General Logistics Department cut the military's budget from RMB 18.5 billion in 1980 to RMB 15.8 billion in 1981. Thus, the military budget as

a percentage of China's total fiscal expenses dropped from 17.2 percent to 16.2 percent.¹⁰⁶ Deng asked the PLA to "be patient" and endure the hardships that would accompany the budget cuts. The PLA loyally obeyed Deng's order, despite the drastic decline in its welfare due to its reduced budget, compounded by the fact that China experienced double-digit inflation during the 1980s and early 1990s.

After experiencing more than a decade of hardships and a loss of direction, the PLA officer corps concluded that the military's economic plight was caused by the lack of attention and respect that the top leaders and the public gave to the PLA. To convince the leadership to pay more attention and allot more resources to the military, as a starting point the PLA had to gradually "correct" Deng's conclusion that war was unlikely. The PLA presented the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis as evidence that the chance of having to fight a war over Taiwan was real. If war was likely, the PLA had to be prepared. Since the 1995-96 crisis, China's international environment, in its leaders' eyes, has continued to deteriorate, as evidenced by the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and Lee Teng-hui's introduction of a "two-State theory" in 1999, followed by the election of pro-independence Chen Shui-bian as Taiwan's president in 2000.

The PLA's Mentality and Its Position on the Timetable Strategy

The PLA's continuous separation from the Party, the development of its independent institutional interests, and the rise of professionalization within the military marked the PLA's mentality in the 1990s and early 2000s. This mentality had mixed and contradictory effects on the PLA officer corps' position regarding the timetable strategy. On the one hand, the PLA was strongly motivated to modernize in order to adapt to the

challenges presented by the RMA, achieve a higher budget, and enhance the morale of its rank and file. Sustained tension across the Taiwan Strait is beneficial to fulfilling all of these needs. On the other hand, the rise of professionalization in the 1990s has made the PLA officer corps in general more cautious about tying itself to an ill-designed strategy that would make war with Taiwan more likely. Therefore, the PLA formed a broad consensus internally on the need to take a tough position on Taiwan, but did not believe that Jiang Zemin's timetable strategy was the proper way to solve the Taiwan problem.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the PLA was strongly motivated by the possibility of a war over Taiwan. Chas Freeman, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, accurately explained the PLA's mentality following the 1995-96 crisis:

The major lesson most American observers, including most members of Congress, have drawn from the crisis is, however, that the prospect of U.S. military intervention can deter a Chinese attack on Taiwan. Beijing reached a different conclusion. China's leaders have always said they would go to war to prevent the permanent division of China. They now believe that they are likely to have to do so. China's armed forces have begun a decade-long effort to acquire the capabilities and do the planning required to have a serious chance of overwhelming Taiwan's formidable defenses.¹⁰⁷

The PLA used the Taiwan issue as an effective rallying point to get a larger budget, more resources, and increased attention from the Party, and to restore its image that was sullied in 1989. The Taiwan issue served as a "dragon head" (*longtou*) that spearheaded the PLA's professionalization and military modernization. In 1999, the PLA introduced a slogan of "absolute victory in the last war" (*juezhuan juesheng*) in order to motivate its officers to intensify military preparations for Taiwan. Yet within the PLA deep disagreements and internal debates on how to solve this problem remained. There were questions in the PLA as to whether China would corner itself by adopting a timetable

strategy. Additionally, different approaches to the Taiwan question called for distinct military preparations, which had implications for the budgets of different services.

The PLA's military planners and strategists expressed doubts about the timetable strategy when it first emerged, since they believed it ran against the military's logic – as Sun Tzu wrote, “just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions” (*bing wu chang shi, shui wu chang xing*).¹⁰⁸ A fixed timetable risks “tying the PLA's hands and feet” and constraining the PLA's freedom of operation, as one PLA strategist explained.¹⁰⁹ According to another PLA strategist, “goals of wars should be determined by military threat; otherwise, one would be ‘pigeonholed’ (*kuangsi*) (by goals set subjectively). Sometimes, when threats press closer (toward us), the timetable's ‘clock’ should tick faster.”¹¹⁰ Military strategists were also cautious about rushing into a war over Taiwan because they suspected the utility of war in securing a sustainable rule over Taiwan. First, a war could cause a catastrophic damage to Taiwan. Second, they tacitly agreed with Deng that in order for Taiwan to reunify with the mainland, the “(mainland's) economic development, to a certain degree, had to be superior to Taiwan's.”¹¹¹ Ruling a Taiwan conquered by force already poses insurmountable challenges. Ruling a Taiwan, which was richer than China and a much more advanced economy, would pose even greater challenges to China if it sought to govern the island. Therefore, these strategists were not only worried about militarily winning the war over Taiwan, but were also concerned with the aftermath and the risk that war would damage Taiwan permanently.

The PLA's “technocrats,” who were in charge of combat “hardware” – armaments, ships and logistics – were most vocal in criticizing the timetable strategy. As one

technocrat explained, “we won’t be ready in five years, and we probably won’t be ready in ten years.”¹¹² The PLA Navy was also more realistic and conservative when evaluating the risks of conducting an amphibious assault against Taiwan and the outcome of a possible direct confrontation with the U.S. Navy. This group of critics started to quiet down after 2008, as the PLA became more confident in its military readiness (in terms of hardware). As one former naval armament officer said, “frontline officers were gung-ho on Taiwan in 1995 but we were indeed not ready. The countdown for military preparation from 2000 was completed by 2008 and by then we were ready militarily. If Chen (Shuibian) declared independence, we would surely use force. However, he didn’t go that far.”¹¹³ While the PLA’s technocrats rejected the timeline strategy because they did not have the hardware to carry out a military operation, the PLA is now confident in its capabilities and this interest group is more sanguine about taking a tougher approach to Taiwan.

The rise of inter-service rivalries, as well as bureaucratic turf wars among powerful and resourceful military regions, has further complicated this internal debate within the PLA. In comparison to the PLA Navy’s cautious attitude, the Second Artillery argued for “victory at all costs” and much more aggressively pushed for a tougher war strategy.¹¹⁴ Younger officers in the Nanjing Military Region, Guangzhou Military Region, and to a certain extent the Jinan Military Region vigorously pushed for intensified war planning on Taiwan and insisted that war is inevitable. Some even fully embraced the timetable strategy. Those officers who would be heavily involved in a Taiwan conflict believed combat experience put an officer on a faster track for promotion. Additionally, tensions over Taiwan would translate to more resources for those officers. As a result,

they were more likely to support the timeline strategy. Those in the Shenyang Military Region and Lanzhou Military Region, which deal with threats on China's northeast and northwest, were neither enthusiastic about this strategy nor positioning the PLA's military preparation around the focus of the potential Taiwan crisis.¹¹⁵

Party-Military Relations

The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis was also important in that it brought the Taiwan issue into the territory of Party-military relations. When the crisis broke out, Jiang was still consolidating his political power, and his control over the PLA was expanding but remained weak. Through the crisis, Jiang learned (and probably over-learned) that he could use the Taiwan issue to win over PLA officers' hearts and minds. Since Jiang took the reins on Taiwan affairs from Yang Shangkun in 1993, he had adopted a two-pronged approach on Taiwan: deepening diplomatic/political engagement and economic interdependence with Taiwan; and strengthening China's military deterrent.¹¹⁶ Beginning in 1999, Jiang increasingly leaned on the militaristic aspects of this approach because he calculated that this was the only way he could remain CMC Chairman after his retirement as president in 2002. Hu Jintao, Jiang's successor, approached the Taiwan issue in a different manner. Hu sought to ease tensions across the Taiwan Strait, as this would allow him to undermine Jiang's justification for staying on the CMC past his retirement as president. Thus, Hu approached the Taiwan issue in a manner that served his broader political goals. Hu succeeded in shifting gears on Taiwan policy. When Ma Ying-jeou was elected Taiwan's president in 2008, the cross-Strait relationship experienced a deep

thaw and moved along a more positive trajectory. As a result, Hu's more conciliatory approach seemed to be vindicated.

The Taiwan Issue and Party-Military Relations under Jiang Zemin

During the Mao era, the PLA had almost exclusive control over the study of the Taiwan problem. Military intelligence and counter-intelligence officers monitored and studied Taiwan's development and trajectory, since the Taiwan problem was characterized as "struggles with enemies" and the step yet to be taken to complete China's Communist revolution and liberation. Therefore, those responsible for analyzing Taiwan came from a background in military intelligence, counter-espionage, and "united front" work, which aimed to use propaganda to convince and catalyze Taiwan's population, particularly its government and military personnel, to rebel against the KMT government and reunite with the mainland.¹¹⁷ Deng Xiaoping did not have any official position on the TALSG, but he was the key person who shifted the focus of Taiwan policy away from war-fighting ("liberating Taiwan") and "struggles with enemies" to political negotiations. Therefore, Taiwan policy during the Deng era was much less militarized and emotional than it was during the Mao era.

When Jiang Zemin assumed the presidency, he needed but lacked the PLA's support. During the early stages of his tenure as president, Jiang had weak effective control over the PLA. Although Jiang obtained the CMC chairmanship in 1989, Deng heavily influenced major decisions and Yang Shangkun controlled the PLA's routine work on Deng's behalf. Prior to 1992, Yang also controlled Taiwan affairs by presiding over the TALSG, which Jiang joined in July 1990.¹¹⁸ Yang directed the cross-Strait

secret envoy communications through Lt. Gen. Yang Side, then director of the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), who met with Su Chih-ch'eng, Director of Lee Teng-hui's office. Although Jiang was the CCP's official top leader, it was difficult for him to intervene in or influence the secret envoy communications with Taiwan.¹¹⁹

Jiang took over the TALSG's reins from Yang in October-November 1993.¹²⁰ Except for the transfer of Hong Kong, Taiwan policy had the highest strategic and security stakes and therefore carried the highest political risk and reward. Since each of his predecessors, from Mao to Marshal Ye and Deng, had a significant impact on cross-Strait relations, it was natural for Jiang to develop a new approach to the Taiwan issue and thus make his own mark on this policy. As soon as Jiang took over the TALSG, he immediately changed its membership.¹²¹ Jiang's contribution to Taiwan policy was to add a transitional period prior to political negotiations on reunification between Taiwan and the mainland, which was encapsulated in the "Eight Points" that he presented in early 1995: "formally ending hostilities" between the two sides as the first step; and jointly "making plans for the development of cross-Strait relations."¹²² Therefore, according to Jiang's initial formulation, China's Taiwan policy should be seen as a two-step strategy; ending the state of hostility using the principle of "one China," and then negotiating the terms of unification. On Taiwan policy, Jiang initially relied on Wang Daohan, his political mentor and the President of ARATS, the 1.5-track channel for cross-Strait communication. After the historic Wang-Koo dialogue, which sought to institutionalize exchanges across the Strait,¹²³ in January 1995 Jiang publicized his "Eight Points" formula. Jiang's policy focused on how to develop the cross-Strait relationship before reunification, therefore implicitly recognizing the possible long-term separation between

the two sides.¹²⁴ Despite ambiguous wording that left space for further interpretation, “Jiang’s Eight Points” was in essence an implicit rejection of the timetable strategy. It established China’s bottom line with reference to Taiwan, which was to counter Taiwan independence, rather than to push for or compel reunification. The key message in “Jiang’s Eight Points” was that China would not give up the option of using force against Taiwan, but it also would not attack Taiwan as long as Taiwan did not claim to be politically separate from China.

1995 was a crucial year for Jiang, as he consolidated his political power and began to establish control over the PLA. Officers close to the Yang brothers were sidelined after the brothers’ downfall in 1992, while a group of senior officers loyal to Jiang started to expand in both numbers and in terms of influence. Jiang tried every method to garner PLA officers’ support.¹²⁵ It was politically important for Jiang to win the respect of the PLA’s rank and file, since the upper echelon, headed by Admiral Liu Huaqing, generally kept its distance from Jiang. Based on the PLA’s strong response in 1995, Jiang quickly learned that to ignore the PLA’s tough position on Taiwan would give his opponents an opening and create widespread resistance in the PLA to his nascent leadership.¹²⁶ This led Jiang to order a more intimidating show of force in 1996, when one missile was fired across Taipei.

During the crisis, despite internal dissent, the PLA leadership, then dominated by professionally-oriented officers, did not want to assault Taiwan because they were woefully unprepared militarily. As one senior PLA officer described the dynamics, “To use an analogy: Beijing and Taipei (in that crisis) were like a guy trying to use a wheat stalk to ward off a wolf, both man and wolf lacking confidence and scared.”¹²⁷ What the

PLA wanted was to be heard domestically, to correct the policy path that had ignored the need for China's military to modernize for more than a decade. That is why Zhang Wannian, Chief of General Staff, pushed to change China's strategic focus to "two centers," economic development *and* military preparations, during the Beidaihe meeting in the summer of 1995.¹²⁸ Deng was still alive in 1995, and apparently revising his policy of focusing on economic development was not an option. Although Jiang talked the PLA down on this proposal, a clear consensus emerged between political and military leaders that China needed to increase its defense budget and give the PLA a greater voice in the policy-making process. To win hearts and minds in the PLA, Jiang not only made popular proposals such as building an "assassin's mace,"¹²⁹ but also introduced the timetable strategy into internal conversations. This could possibly have been a tactical move that allowed Jiang to evade the PLA's pressure, since no position on Taiwan, except for an ultimatum, which was infeasible, could be tougher than the timetable strategy.

As Jiang started his second and final term as president in 1997, leaving a personal legacy loomed large in his mind and no legacy would be bigger than achieving reunification with Taiwan. By this point, Jiang had gradually established effective control over the PLA, and Hong Kong had been transferred back to Beijing. Jiang, a man "ambitious to do showy things" to cement his personal legacy (*hao da xi gong*), aspired to accomplish what even Deng Xiaoping had failed to achieve.¹³⁰ Jiang became increasingly serious about pursuing the timetable strategy, a message he expressed to a visiting President Clinton, when he said, "China must have a timetable for solving the Taiwan issue."¹³¹

At one point following the 1995-96 crisis, the timetable strategy was discussed in the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) and possibly the Politburo, in which Jiang had certain allies but also faced serious skeptics on this concept.¹³² Jiang realized that on such a vital issue, in which the PBSC remained deeply divided, it had to be sent for deliberations to the broad-based CCP Central Committee (CCPCC) in order to be formally adopted, where he would surely face more questioning and resistance.¹³³ Therefore, Jiang never brought this issue to the CCPCC.¹³⁴ As a political compromise, Jiang and the other Politburo members talked about it both during internal meetings and on public occasions, and, depending on how supportive these Politburo members were of this concept, expressed it in either direct or coded language. In this way, each could illustrate this concept without making an official commitment, while adding his own unique interpretation. Every PBSC member and 17 out of 22 Politburo members attended the 1998 Central Taiwan Affairs Meeting, which was unprecedented. In January 1999, Vice Premier Qian Qichen, who oversaw Taiwan affairs, stated, “the Taiwan issue could not be dragged on forever,” which CCTV picked up and broadcast but was deleted from the later Xinhua News report.¹³⁵

Filled with a series of events politically catastrophic for Jiang, ranging from the U.S. bombing of China’s embassy in Belgrade, Lee Teng-hui’s public articulation of a “state-to-state theory,” China’s political campaign against Falungong, to the Cox Report released by the U.S. Congress that was critical of China, 1999 was a pivotal year that pushed Jiang in a more militaristic direction. Among these incidents, Lee’s speech was the most threatening, as the PLA recognized it remained at a military disadvantage vis-a-vis Taiwan and therefore could not do anything if Lee pushed for independence.¹³⁶

Despite the United States' efforts to explain that its bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade happened by mistake, the majority of PLA officers were not convinced.¹³⁷ Seemingly under siege by international and domestic security challenges, Jiang needed the PLA's support more than ever.

As the clock started ticking and the end of Jiang's tenure as president was approaching, the Taiwan issue became a political football. Jiang apparently aspired to prolong his official political life by remaining CMC Chairman. To achieve this, Jiang had to fulfill two conditions: first, Jiang had to have the support of the PLA's top leadership; second, he had to find a reason to remain CMC Chairman beyond his term limit that was justifiable to a broad swath of the Party. Jiang had already consolidated his effective control over the PLA, as evidenced by his ability to cut 500,000 military personnel in 1997, divest the PLA from the marketplace in 1998, elevate Cao Gangchuan onto the CMC in 1998, and then unprecedentedly promote Guo Boxiong, then Deputy Chief of General Staff, and Xu Caihou, then Deputy Director of General Politics Department, to members of the CMC in 1999.¹³⁸ Second, nothing was more convenient than sustained tension over the Taiwan issue to justify Jiang's ambition to stay on as CMC Chairman. The U.S. granted Taiwan's wish to purchase anti-aircraft missiles and SPS-40 radar, which added to the tensions emerging over the 2000 Taiwanese presidential election. In early 2000, President Clinton partially rolled back ground surrendered in the "Three Nos" by revising one aspect of his October 1997 remark from "the relationship between the PRC and Taiwan is for the Chinese themselves to determine" to "Taiwan's future status must be determined with the assent of the Taiwan people."¹³⁹ As a result of these factors, Jiang advanced the assessment that "war across the Strait is inevitable" (*taihai biyou*

yizhan) in closed-door internal meetings,¹⁴⁰ which aligned himself with the prevailing view within the PLA.¹⁴¹

The PLA walked a fine line on the timetable strategy. Jiang did have substantial support for this strategy from within the PLA. In addition to the Nanjing Military Region's "young turks," some PLA officers did indeed cater to Jiang's thinking, among whom Xiong Guangkai was identified as the one who "always carried two plans in his pockets, and took out whichever plan Jiang preferred."¹⁴² Nonetheless, there was certainly a major split within the PLA throughout the latter half of the 1990s on whether China should proactively compel Taiwan to reunite with the mainland by use of force within a deadline, which was the core of the timetable strategy. The mainstream PLA officers who participated in deliberations and planning had been consistently supporting military preparations against Taiwan, but opposed a full adoption of the timetable strategy because "the military must fight wars commensurate to its military capabilities."¹⁴³ After the 1995-96 crisis deescalated and as professionalization accelerated, more PLA officers voiced reservations regarding the timetable strategy. Moderate thinking began to emerge and dominate the PLA. Their opposition was rooted in the following arguments:

First, the PLA's moderates were worried about the "day after tomorrow," or the aftermath and destruction that destructive attacks would have on Taiwan. Second, if China lost the war over Taiwan, the CCP would lose the legitimacy to govern China. Additionally, it would likely produce a domino effect and induce Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia to undertake efforts to break away from China. Fears about the potential repercussions if the war was lost far outweighed the potential gains if the war was won.

Third, the PLA's moderates were convinced, due to the U.S.'s actions during the 1995-96 crisis, that the U.S. would militarily intervene if China launched an attack on Taiwan. Fourth, the PLA was also worried that the Chinese public might have difficulties supporting a prolonged and bloody war over Taiwan. Fifth, a large group of PLA officers believed that China should continue to focus on economic and military modernization, rather than the immediate use of force to resolve the Taiwan issue.

Among all the services, the PLA Navy adopted the most cautious position toward the timetable strategy. Within the PLA Navy, naval armament officers most ardently resisted this proposal. A senior PLA Navy officer in charge of naval armament research pointed out in December 1999 that serious preparations for an attack on Taiwan would force China's ship-building industry to shift most of its capacity to building amphibious assault ships and other military naval vessels. At this point, the focus of China's ship-building efforts was still on commercial and civilian ships. This senior officer commented: "Everybody could talk tough. But to fight a war, you need enough muscles, and the right muscles. Clearly, we haven't taken that step (to shift the whole shipbuilding business to military vessel building). Have a timetable and attack Taiwan? We weren't ready in 1996. And we won't be ready in five years (unless the overall posture of military preparation is shifted)."¹⁴⁴ The PLA aggressively sought to gain the "right muscles" after 1999 and made significant progress in improving its air superiority and missile/artillery assault capability. In 2000, Russia agreed and subsequently delivered in the next two years approximately 40 Su-30MKK two-seat multipurpose fighters to China.¹⁴⁵ China's 4th generation J-10 fighters entered service in 2004, followed by the J-11/Su-27, a multi-role fighter bomber and air superiority aircraft with a maximum operational radius of

around 1,500 kilometers. The WeiShi-2 (guardian) multiple launch rocket system started to emerge in 2008, with a maximum range of 200 kilometers, which put Taipei and Keelung within its reach. China, however, was still lacking in terms of amphibious vessels, according to a 2009 Rand Corporation study.¹⁴⁶

The lack of consensus in the PLA on the timetable strategy, compounded by the difficulty of building a consensus among the civilian leadership, constituted the main obstacle for Jiang to bring this issue to the CCPCC for discussion. Jiang instead sought to personally articulate this strategy and have other top leaders expound upon it during internal meetings and on public occasions. Jiang's strategy, however, lacked institutional legitimacy and later proved to be the policy's Achilles heel. The PLA became the biggest beneficiary of the rhetoric on the timetable strategy, partly due to the reality of China's security challenges and partly due to Jiang's political maneuvering. Since the timetable strategy is a concept the PLA largely resisted, the fact that it was never institutionalized and was instead merely articulated through politicians' oral statements suited the PLA's needs best.

The PLA benefited most from China's deteriorating security environment, which began in 1999, as evidenced by the increase in its official budget. China's defense budget over the next decade (2000 and 2009) exceeded China's combined defense budget for the previous 50 years (1949-1999).¹⁴⁷ For instance, the PLA's official budget in 2001 and 2002 increased by 19.4 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively. Second, with Jiang's support, the PLA gained unprecedented resources, some of which were not reflected in its official budget, to make military preparations for a Taiwan contingency within a five-year timeframe beginning in 1999.¹⁴⁸ The PLA, joining hands with China's defense

industry, launched the “995 Project” (*995 gong cheng*), which was dedicated to enhancing the R&D, production, and deployment of a series of new high-tech weapons systems, previously described by Jiang as the “assassin’s mace.”¹⁴⁹ Through this program, the PLA was given almost a blank check to propose and pursue any major weapons system that could plausibly be included as part of the “assassin’s mace,” often using resources and funds outside of its official budget.¹⁵⁰ “Any (Western) weapon system under the sun was taken under tireless conceptual and feasibility studies,” according to a retired military scientist.¹⁵¹ With Jiang’s support, not only was China’s defense industry authorized to make 50-year armament development plans,¹⁵² but the PLA also obtained enormous funding and support to develop high-tech weapons systems beginning in 1999. With this funding and support, the PLA successfully developed the J-20 fourth-generation stealth fighter jet and a new generation of Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) weapons. Besides greater resources for China’s indigenous armament R&D, the PLA also strengthened its military capabilities through foreign armament procurement. According to SIPRI, China was the world’s largest conventional weapons buyer from 2000-04, accounting for 14 percent of global arms transactions and 45 percent of Russia’s arms exports during this period.¹⁵³

In 2002 and 2003, China underwent a leadership transition, but Jiang held onto the key military post, which created the problem of “two centers”: a supreme Party leader and a supreme PLA leader, but no single person serving as the final arbiter of power. As David M. Lampton has pointed out, this meant, “it may be unclear at times where (or who) the authoritative party center is.”¹⁵⁴ In November 2002, Jiang transferred the position of General Secretary of the Party to Hu Jintao. In March 2003, Jiang transferred

the Presidency to Hu, as mandated by China's Constitution.¹⁵⁵ Jiang, however, managed to retain the CMC Chairmanship. This move created a dilemma in the Party-military relationship known as "two centers," as there was uncertainty as to who represented the Party and to whom the PLA would swear allegiance. In the PLA's command and control system, the CMC chairman is the supreme leader and even the general secretary of the Party is subordinate to the CMC chairman within the realm of military affairs. This position, however, contradicted the golden rule that "the Party commands the gun."

The PLA's top leadership, which Jiang put in place in 2002, explicitly or implicitly supported Jiang's retention of the CMC Chairmanship. Jiang's allies in the PLA's top leadership included Guo Boxiong, Xu Caihou, and Li Jinai, and to a lesser extent Liang Guanglie, Liao Xilong, and Cao Gangchuan. Some, such as Liu Zhenwu, Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, were more vocal than others in expressing their support for Jiang. In 2002-04, PLA leaders repeatedly and explicitly urged the PLA to obey the commands of "the Party Center, the CMC, and Chairman Jiang."¹⁵⁶ However, this stance was unpopular among the PLA's general officer corps, which is increasingly professionalized. A retired senior PLA officer who served under General Zhang Zhen criticized Jiang's "greed for power" as he said:

Having "two centers" breeds politicization and factionalism, poisons professionalization, and causes confusion in the officer corps. In the Chinese language, one center (*zhongxin*/中心) could mean "loyalty" (*zhong*/忠), while two centers means "trouble" (*huan*/患). For many officers, Jiang represented nothing but trouble for the PLA after 2002.¹⁵⁷

Jiang's retention of the CMC Chairmanship in 2002 created serious confusion within China's national security policy-making establishment and in particular raised questions over China's Taiwan policy: Is time on China's side or on Taiwan's side? What should be the basic "line" on the Taiwan issue: a tacit timetable (compellence) strategy, a

continuous deterrence and intimidation strategy, or open-ended engagement? Should the PLA continue its military preparations?

The Taiwan Issue and Party-Military Relations under Hu Jintao

Despite his position as the Party's top leader, Hu remained only Vice Chairman of the CMC, and thus was subordinate to Jiang within the PLA from 2002-04. Although other members of the PBSC constrained Hu on multiple issues, as the TALSG's head Hu was able to decide who could participate in policy-making, and thus who could take the lead on Taiwan policy. As a result, Hu was able to rewrite China's Taiwan policy if he so chose.

Hu was allegedly critical of how Taiwan policy was handled under Jiang, i.e. "offense by pen and intimidation by sword," which he believed constantly backed Beijing into a corner.¹⁵⁸ Hu clearly had a different approach to Taiwan policy, as he believed China should set a "harder" bottom line but pair this with "softer" engagements with Taiwan. First, Hu shifted the focus of China's Taiwan policy from seeking peaceful reunification to preventing Taiwan from declaring de jure independence. This shift was further translated from a CCP political policy (if Taiwan proclaims independence this means war), into the Anti-Secession Law (ASL), which then eliminated ambiguity and room for reinterpretation in case of democratization or regime change on the mainland. Therefore, by hardening China's bottom line on Taiwan, Hu was able to get enough support domestically to shift gears toward a more flexible Taiwan policy. Second, in order to win over Taiwan's population, Hu displayed greater flexibility by: removing pre-conditions for opening the "three links" (transportation, commerce, and communication)

between the two sides; removing obstacles that inhibited greater engagement with the pro-independence DPP; and adopting targeted policies to influence different constituencies in Taiwan. All of these initiatives were reflected in his 2004 “517 Speech.”¹⁵⁹ Through these measures, Hu made it clear that his priority was not achieving reunification as soon as possible, but rather was maintaining the status quo with Taiwan. In other words, China would be willing to work with Taiwan and develop peaceful and stable cross-Straits relations, as long as Taiwan did not move toward de jure independence.

Hu’s new approach to Taiwan, initially embodied in his “Four Points,” which he delivered in a meeting of the CCPCC in March 2003, should be understood as a component of his overall conception of China’s broader national strategy. In November 2003, Zheng Bijian, one of Hu’s close advisors and the former President of the Central Party School, presented China’s peaceful rise theory at the Bo’ao Asia Forum. A month later, Premier Wen Jiabao gave a detailed enunciation of China’s path of peaceful rise, explaining that China’s new national strategy was pursuing development in peaceful ways. Therefore, Hu’s more flexible and patient Taiwan policy was in line with his overall vision of maintaining the window of opportunity for China’s continuous economic modernization and further integration into the international system.

According to Hu’s thinking on both China’s broader national strategy and its Taiwan policy, the PLA’s role was deemphasized and the military would only come into play as the last resort. Hu was convinced that Jiang’s Taiwan policy led to a vicious cycle whereby the rise of a Taiwan pro-independence force necessitated the consideration of military methods, which allowed the PLA’s influence to increase and Beijing’s intimidation of Taiwan militarily. All this in turn was presented in Taiwan as evidence

for why Taiwan had to declare independence. It was rational for Hu to deemphasize the military, since from 2002-04 Jiang was still directly commanding the PLA and Hu had weak control over military affairs. Continuation of the provocation-intimidation-more provocation cycle could perpetuate cross-Strait tensions, which Jiang could use to justify staying in power as CMC Chairman. Naturally, Hu would choose to distance himself from the timetable strategy and formulate his own Taiwan strategy, as this would allow him to squeeze Jiang and further consolidate his political power. To eliminate Jiang's reason for continuing to serve as CMC Chairman, Hu had to pare back China's militaristic approach and undertake bold measures to achieve détente with Taiwan. Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's referenda campaigns in 2003-04, however, posed a challenge to Hu's strategy.

Hu's approach proved successful in easing tensions across the Strait in 2004-05. He unprecedentedly met with more than 100 Taiwanese businesspeople in December 2004 to emphasize that politics would not influence cross-Strait economic and trade relations. Taiwan's exports to the mainland increased by one-third from 2003 to 2004. A series of path-breaking developments took place in 2005: in March, KMT Vice Chairman Chiang Pin-kun visited Beijing; in April, two weeks after China passed the ASL, Lien Chan, the KMT's Chairman, visited Beijing on a historic visit; and in May, James Soong, the founder of the People First Party (PFP), visited Beijing.

Hu's new approach to Taiwan prescribed a much smaller role for the PLA, and therefore the PLA resisted Hu's strategy.¹⁶⁰ Yet Hu was able to contain this criticism and maintain firm control over Taiwan policy. Hu allegedly snapped at the PLA in an internal meeting, urging the PLA's leadership to "mind the military's only job, which is war-

fighting.”¹⁶¹ During Hu’s official first meeting with the PLA, on the day he was elected the Chairman of the State Military Commission in March 2005, he did not mention Taiwan or the ASL, which was being rolled out. Rather, Hu emphasized the need for military modernization typified by “low input but high output,” and stressed that the PLA’s mission was “effectively safeguarding (China’s) national security and unification” on the basis of economic development.¹⁶² Under Hu, “military operations other than war” (MOOTW) gradually became a focal point of the PLA’s development. In his speech at the 2004 enlarged meeting of the CMC, in which he took over as Chairman of the CMC, Hu warned of “social contradictions and problems” and how international problems posed challenges to internal security, drawing a link between international terrorism and the rise of Uighur separatism in Xinjiang, and went on to put forward “new historic missions” for the PLA.¹⁶³ “New historic missions,” also known as the “three provides and one protection” are defined as: “providing an important guarantee of strength for the party to consolidate its ruling position”; “providing a strong security guarantee for safeguarding the period of important strategic opportunity for national development”; “providing a powerful strategic support for safeguarding national interests”; and “playing an important role in protecting world peace and promoting common development.” The PLA’s missions in the “three provides and one protection” deemphasized the urgency of the Taiwan problem, which was part of Hu’s attempt to push the PLA to look more inward to China’s internal stability and outward beyond Taiwan.

After Jiang officially stepped down from the CMC in 2004, he gave all active-duty full generals a statue of Zheng Chenggong, who took back Taiwan from the Dutch during the Ming Dynasty. Jiang intended to remind these generals that the task of taking

back Taiwan had not yet been completed. Given Jiang's pressure and attempts to introduce a more hardnosed Taiwan strategy, it is clear that Hu took a great political risk by shifting the most important policy of his tenure toward a "softer," more accommodating path, and abandoning Jiang's proposed timetable strategy. As Taiwan's DPP-led government began losing momentum to the KMT after Lien Chan's visit to China in 2005, Hu's approach to the Taiwan issue was increasingly vindicated. Additionally, the continuous thawing and increased interaction across the Strait seemed to provide evidence that a more accommodating strategy was effective. By 2006, the timetable strategy was no longer brought up, and by 2008, when the KMT won the presidential election and the cross-Strait dynamics completely changed, Hu had garnered solid support for his approach on Taiwan from within the Party.¹⁶⁴ As an organizational adjustment, the Minister of Commerce was added to the TALSG in 2008, clearly indicating that Hu's main focus was on increasing economic and trade interactions with Taiwan. As economic ties and trade were increasingly prioritized, the PLA's voice became weaker on Taiwan policy. The PLA also lost a seat on the TALSG. Before 2008, two military members sat on the TALSG – the Deputy Chief of General Staff overseeing foreign affairs and military intelligence, and the Vice Chairman of the CMC who also sat on the Politburo. Yet after 2008, only the former seat for Deputy Chief of General Staff was left.

Policy Process: Multiplication of Actors

Although the Party's top leader has always determined the main direction of China's Taiwan policy, the number of actors that participated in the Taiwan policy-

making process multiplied during the 1990s. Entities at the grassroots level, the semi-official level, and those that focused on various functional areas began to influence Taiwan policy. By the end of the decade, coastal provinces whose companies had significant investments in Taiwan and were recipients of Taiwanese investment, local branches of the Taiwan Affairs Office, the Ministry of Transportation, and research analysts that specialized in Taiwan affairs had all coalesced into an interest group that favored greater cross-Strait communication, and increased economic and trade relations.

The bureaucratic organizations that participated in China's Taiwan policy-making process changed drastically during the early 1980s, after the focus of China's Taiwan policy shifted from "liberation by use of force" under Mao to "reunification through negotiation" under Deng in 1978, followed by Deng's "one country, two systems" policy introduced in 1982-83.¹⁶⁵ Since Ye Jianying's presentation of the "Nine Points" in 1981, China's Taiwan strategy fundamentally shifted from reunification by use of force to peaceful reunification, with the use of force only considered a method of strategic deterrence. In 1988, the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) was established under the State Council, and was to be overseen by the Vice Premier or State Councilor on foreign affairs. TAO was formed in order to plan and coordinate government affairs on Taiwan. In 1991, TAO integrated previously established local offices on Taiwan affairs and systematically established structures at the provincial, municipal, county, and even district level. These substructures would be tasked with: directly handling the resolution of disputes between Taiwanese investors and the local Chinese authorities over various issues such as labor and land use complaints, environmental concerns, and tax evasion charges; conducting research and studies; coordinating economic ties, trade and communication; and

participating in the drafting of local laws and regulations related to Taiwan affairs.

Twenty ministry-level agencies, including the MFA, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transportation, and the People's Bank of China (China's central bank) have an embedded Taiwan affairs office or unit that handles issues related to Taiwan.

With intensifying cross-Straits relations in every sphere that were expanding both geographically and in functional areas, a broad spectrum of stakeholders and important actors entered the policy process and started to play crucial and increasingly independent roles. During the Mao era, the core bureaucratic entities that shaped China's Taiwan policy were the PLA, Central Investigative Department (later the Ministry of State Security), Ministry of Public Security, Department of United Front, and the MFA. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, TAO, ARATS, ministries overseeing economic and trade affairs (MOFCOM and then Ministry of Commerce), those concerned with communications, as well as local governments were added to this core. Even non-governmental organizations such as the Taiwanese Business Association (TBA, or *taishang xiehui*), composed of Taiwanese businesspeople who had investments on the mainland, started to play an important role in policy deliberations.¹⁶⁶ Clearly, there was a proliferation of interests and stakeholders in Taiwan policy.

Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO)

The current TAO can be traced to two sources of bureaucratic power, traditions and personnel of the Party and the State –The Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG) of the CCP, and the State Council. The TALSG of the CCP was established in July 1954, and its members primarily specialized in military intelligence and “united

front” or psychological warfare. Its members included Li Kenong, Luo Ruiqing, Liao Chengzhi, Luo Qingchang, and Xu Bing. While the Cultural Revolution interrupted the TALSG, it resumed its activities in December 1979 and was headed by Deng Yingchao (Zhou Enlai’s widow) and Liao Chengzhi.¹⁶⁷ Since Deng, who was at this point old and in poor health, left most of the routine work to Liao, conceivably Yang Shangkun, then CMC Secretary General, took over the TALSG’s operations after Liao passed away in 1983. Lt. Gen. Yang Side, a highly decorated military intelligence officer, headed the Taiwan Affairs Office of the Central Committee, the executive arm of the TALSG of the Party, serving as its Director from 1985 to 1987.¹⁶⁸ In 1988, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council was established and headed by Ding Guangen. This organization primarily dealt with coordination and functional issues, as well as the implementation of policies that the TALSG had decided upon.¹⁶⁹ It also set up offices at the provincial, municipal, and county level, which were dedicated to improving people-to-people communications and trade/investment between both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The TAO under the Central Committee (CC) was much more powerful than the TAO under the State Council.¹⁷⁰ In 1993, TAO of the CC and TAO of the State Council were integrated into one office, but each organization retained its name. With this integration, Jiang Zemin brought together bureaucracies of the Party and the State, which would now work together to make and enforce Taiwan policy.¹⁷¹ Due to the exponential increase in cross-Strait economic, trade, cultural and people-to-people ties in the 1990s and 2000s, TAO’s portfolio has expanded, to include responsibility for “setting and implementing guidelines and policies related to Taiwan.”¹⁷²

In terms of bureaucratic power, resources and talented personnel, TAO was weaker than either the MFA or the PLA. However, it has become an indispensable player in Taiwan policy-making because of its close communication and engagement with Taiwanese businesses that have a presence on the mainland. TAO has a bureaucratic culture that is distinctly different than the MFA or the PLA. When TAO of the State Council was established in 1988, people-to-people communications across the Strait had already been well-developed. Therefore, upon its establishment, TAO absorbed a large number of civilian scholars/practitioners outside the system who had experience interacting with their Taiwanese counterparts and relied heavily on their opinions and advice.¹⁷³ For example, TAO drafted “Jiang’s Eight Points” partly based on the advice and guidance of Taiwanese scholars, visitors, and businesspeople.¹⁷⁴ A group of analysts led by Xing Kuishan, then director of TAO’s Research Bureau, initially formulated “Jiang’s Eight Points” based on the thinking of Wang Daohan, Chairman of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS).¹⁷⁵ However, the document changed throughout the drafting process, and the final product incorporated much of the advice from Taiwanese interlocutors that TAO interacted with.

Because TAO is the designated agency that supervises Taiwan affairs and has a top-down structure at all levels of the government, it has become the agency Taiwanese businesspeople with investments on the mainland choose to interact with most.¹⁷⁶ This is because TAO’s structure allows Taiwanese businesspeople that operate at the local level to reach the TAO at the central government level, which then has the authority to arbitrate issues that have strategic significance and influence a large group of Taiwanese businesspeople.¹⁷⁷ Influence between TAO and Taiwanese business interests flows in

both directions. As TAO at various levels is the supervisory agency for the TBA, government officials at TAO concurrently hold positions in the TBA and use those positions to provide support to Taiwanese businesspeople. Therefore, TAO and its local offices have formed a symbiotic relationship with TBA. This is an important two-way channel for communications between Beijing and Taiwanese investors, and a key platform for Taiwanese businesspeople to collectively exert pressure on the Chinese government. For example, in 1991, local TBAs across China successfully lobbied TAO of the State Council to pressure the government to abandon a proposed regulation that would have had detrimental effects on Taiwanese businesses with operations on the mainland by mandating an increase in the value-added tax of 17 percent.¹⁷⁸ Conversely, TAO also uses its close links with Taiwanese businesspeople to exert pressure on the Taiwanese government. TBAs regularly meet with the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC, the TAO's counterpart) and lobby Taiwan's President, and successfully persuaded the Taiwanese government to drop its "Go Slow" policy and open the three direct links across the Strait.¹⁷⁹ Neither the KMT nor the DPP can afford to ignore the TBAs' voice, since Taiwanese businesspeople constitute a critical interest group and can help sway elections on Taiwan.¹⁸⁰

TAO has had a traditional bond with the PLA, which is reflected by TAO's use of military intelligence resources such as satellite images and listening posts on the periphery of Taiwan.¹⁸¹ Additionally, PLA officers are embedded in TAO's personnel structure, which is further evidence of the PLA's links to TAO. For instance, Major General Wang Zaixi, a senior military intelligence officer, served as Deputy Director of TAO from 2000-05, and Li Qingzhou, whose professional background was in the PLA,

served as spokesman and Assistant to Director of TAO from 1991-98.¹⁸² After Wang stepped down from TAO and was appointed Vice Chairman of ARATS, the PLA still placed officers in TAO, though at lower levels and in less public positions.¹⁸³ The PLA has strong ties to TAO, but these bonds may be weakening.

The PLA and TAO, along with the Ministry of State Security (MSS), collaborate on research and share findings periodically, though each has its own channel of information collection. In 1984, a Taiwan-focused think tank, the Institute of Taiwan Studies, was established and publicly hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), but reports to the Ministry of State Security (MSS). Approximately 80 percent of its researchers are from the MSS system, with the remaining 20 percent from the military intelligence system.¹⁸⁴ Notably, all think tanks dedicated to analyzing Taiwan affairs are closely associated with and at least partially funded by the military intelligence apparatus and the MSS and its local subsidiary, including the Institute of Taiwan Studies under Xiamen University, the Institute of Taiwan Studies under CASS, and the Institute of Taiwan Studies under Beijing United University. Beginning in 2008, the ownership, funding source, and personnel of these research institutions became more diversified, and the umbrella organization exerted more control and provided more support.¹⁸⁵

Nonetheless, these research networks to a large extent still serve the PLA, TAO, and MSS.

It would be a mistake to simply assume that the PLA is pitted against TAO and ARATS during policy debates.¹⁸⁶ The three organizations share the goal of reunifying Taiwan with the mainland. Additionally, it is an oversimplification to assume that the PLA automatically pushes Taiwan policy in a more militant direction. For example,

General Wang Zaixi was known in the military for his pragmatism and moderate views on Taiwan. It is unclear who is influencing whom when PLA officers serve in TAO. However, after decades of increased cross-Strait investment and trade as well as people-to-people exchanges, paired with the PLA's growing professionalization and the increasing specialization of its missions, these bureaucracies' interests and priorities began to diverge.

Once China's Taiwan policy shifted to emphasizing "peaceful development" in 2008, there were notable clashes between TAO and the PLA. When explaining China's Taiwan policy, TAO would only mention "peaceful development," while the PLA would simultaneously mention both "peaceful development" and "military preparations."¹⁸⁷ Additionally, when teaching at the Central Party School, Rear Admiral Yang Yi criticized TAO's lack of timely and effective counter-measures against Chen Shui-bian, which led to a turf war and an unofficial reprimand of Yang.¹⁸⁸ TAO filed a formal complaint to Hu Jintao through Wang Gang, Director of the General Office of Central Committee, who worked in TAO under Lieutenant General Yang Side during the early 1980s. When Major General Luo Yuan criticized Ma Ying-jeou's "three nos" policy (no reunification, no independence, and no use of force) as a way of pursuing "peaceful separatism" in 2009,¹⁸⁹ Wang Yi, Director of TAO, called General Liu Yuan, Political Commissar of Academy of Military Sciences and Luo's boss, to criticize Luo's ideas. General Liu responded to Wang by exclaiming, "Ma isn't supportive of peaceful reunification, so what is it if it isn't peaceful separatism?!"¹⁹⁰ Since the significant improvement of cross-Strait relations beginning in 2008, the PLA and TAO's disagreements on threat assessments and policy prescriptions increasingly differ. These clashes magnified after

Wang Yi, then a promising MFA diplomat (and now China's Foreign Minister), took over TAO.

Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS)

Officially created as a non-governmental organization (NGO) or a social group (*shehui tuanti*), the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) is a quasi-alternative government agency or a so-called “white glove” agency under TAO's administrative guidance. Established in 1991 as a counterpart to Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), ARATS negotiates with SEF in an attempt to resolve operational difficulties presented by the expansive economic and people-to-people exchanges across the Strait that are conducted without the requisite political foundation. This designated negotiation function makes it an umbrella organization for various initiatives, such as the “three links” and the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). Negotiations on setting up representative offices of SEF and ARATS, discussed first in 2012, would possibly complete in 2016.¹⁹¹

Based in Beijing, ARATS has four division-level departments – secretarial work, coordination, general department and consulting (later changed to liaison) – and three divisions – a legal consultation center established in 1993, a department of economic affairs, and a department of research, both of which were founded in 1994. In addition to its Beijing headquarters, ARATS has a Macao office, but does not have other local branches. Most of ARATS' personnel come from TAO.

As essentially a government-run NGO, ARATS is an organization with weak bureaucratic power in China's policy process. Because ARATS, unlike TAO, lacks

nationwide local structures, Taiwanese businesspeople do not use it as frequently to solve their practical difficulties. Rather, the pressure exerted on ARATS comes primarily from SEF, which Taiwanese businesspeople prefer in comparison to MAC.¹⁹² Unlike SEF, which facilitates people-to-people exchanges and promotes communication along functional areas, ARATS is dedicated to carrying out political negotiations. With this mandate, ARATS engages in negotiations geared toward promoting the “three links” across the Strait and arranges meetings between senior officials. Therefore, it lacks both the interest and the ability to deal with the more practical issues and concrete cases of disputes relevant to Taiwanese investment on the mainland. When ARATS, which as an organization wants to focus on promoting political negotiations, is tasked with resolving issues of a practical nature, it adopts a relatively defensive and conservative attitude. Such an approach is evidenced by how it handles the verification of Taiwanese reporters coming to the mainland or the “thousand-island-lake accident,” in which criminals robbed and murdered dozens of Taiwanese tourists in 1994. During the latter incident, ARATS was reluctant to grant access to Taiwanese journalists to cover this incident or facilitate the visit of victims’ families to the site.¹⁹³

ARATS’ generally conservative nature contrasted with that of its first Chairman, Wang Daohan (1991-2005), who advocated a more flexible and open policy position. Wang took a creative approach to Taiwan policy, and had the added benefit of having Jiang’s ear throughout most of the 1990s. As Taiwan continued to be reluctant to conduct official talks, ARATS played a crucial role during cross-Strait negotiations. ARATS’ increasing role and Wang’s flexibility were on display in November 1997, when Wang made a groundbreaking explanation of “one China” to a Taiwanese delegation. As Wang

explained the concept, “one China is not equal to the People’s Republic of China. It is not equal to the Republic of China either. It is a reunified China, which compatriots on both sides of the Strait established together; one China should be a China that is yet to be reunified but (in which) both sides walk together on the path of reunification.”¹⁹⁴ The essence of Wang’s vision for reunification was that of shared sovereignty. Wang’s role was minimized after the MFA and PLA criticized his liberal and flexible policy positions. Jiang in fact personally sidelined Wang after 1998.

With a liberal vision for cross-Strait relations, Wang faced opposition from two fronts – the MFA and PLA. The MFA, highly sensitive to sovereignty issues, aggressively criticized Wang’s proposal. Former ambassadors criticized Wang by arguing, “we have been fighting our whole lives for a new China, but just in one phrase by Wang Daohan, the idea of New China we fought for is gone?!”¹⁹⁵ As Taiwan subsequently cited Wang’s words to defend Taiwan’s position, the MFA criticized Wang for “making trouble.”¹⁹⁶ The PLA and Wang Daohan’s circle of advisors and associates in Shanghai, following the 1995-96 crisis, jockeyed for power. Wang clearly opposed the timetable strategy from the very beginning, and also disagreed on the effectiveness of military intimidation. In return, the PLA criticized Wang’s approach to negotiations, accusing him of putting too much on the negotiating table.¹⁹⁷

When Wang presented his new interpretation of “one China” in a policy proposal he presented at a meeting the TALSG hosted in preparation for the 1998 visit by SEF President Koo Chen-fu, he was bombarded with criticism.¹⁹⁸ The ideas endorsed at this meeting turned into the “86 insightful characters,” which Wang presented in his meeting with Koo in October of that year. According to this position, there is only one China in

the world and Taiwan is a part of China, but it is yet to be united; under the principle of “one China,” the two sides across the Taiwan Strait possess equal political positions in negotiations and should discuss reunification. Finally, a country’s sovereignty and territory cannot be divided and Taiwan’s political status should be discussed under the prerequisite of “one China.” Although the “86 insightful characters” made several breakthroughs, such as acknowledging the equal political positions of Beijing and Taipei in negotiations, it represented a giant step back from Wang’s original thinking.¹⁹⁹

In 1998, Jiang distanced himself from Wang.²⁰⁰ Wang became increasingly controversial, due to his seemingly more moderate and flexible negotiating position, as articulated in his 86-character enunciation regarding the future of cross-Strait relations.²⁰¹ Jiang had to take into account the MFA and PLA’s objections, since their critiques resonated with Jiang’s political opponents in the Party.²⁰² Jiang’s relationship with Wang also grew more distant as he consolidated his control over the PLA and therefore began to lean more toward the military. Lee Teng-hui’s “two State theory,” introduced in 1999, further undermined ARATS, and its power remained diminished until 2008.²⁰³

ARATS has maintained a relatively close or at least cordial channel of communication with the PLA, despite the fact that they sit on different sides in the cross-Strait relationship. ARATS was founded in the PLA GSD’s compound, according to a PLA officer,²⁰⁴ though the founding ceremony was reportedly held in the Great Hall of the People.²⁰⁵ While the PLA and ARATS clashed under Wang, the two have had a relatively smooth and respectful relationship with each other.²⁰⁶ Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff in charge of intelligence, was born in Shanghai and had a close bond with the political elites of the “Shanghai Gang”.²⁰⁷ Within this clique, Wang was

highly respected due to his revolutionary background, previous experience as Mayor of Shanghai, and access to Jiang. The PLA maintained regular consultations with Wang and his Shanghai-based advisors during and after Wang's tenure at ARATS.²⁰⁸ The PLA in general acknowledged and respected Wang and his advisors' knowledge and insights on Taiwan, as well as their relationships with important politicians on Taiwan. The PLA's "technocrats," those officers who primarily focus on Taiwan affairs, shared Wang's analysis of the Taiwan situation. The PLA's own analysts on Taiwan, notably both Wang Zaixi of the GSD system and Xin Qi of the GPD system, were pragmatists on Taiwan.²⁰⁹ They did not, however, necessarily agree with Wang's policy prescriptions due to the PLA's bureaucratic interests and its differing strategic considerations.

Local Governments, Ministry-level Transportation Authority

Government actors with important stakes in cross-Strait economic and trade relations include local governments, especially those in Jiangsu, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shanghai and Tianjin, as well as ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation/Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM/MOC) and the Ministry of Transportation.

Taiwanese investments on the mainland have greatly deepened the interdependence between Taiwan and China's economies and these economic ties continue to expand. A survey of the thousand-largest Taiwanese businesses on the mainland revealed that combined revenues of these businesses on the mainland in 2009 exceeded one trillion RMB, equivalent to two-thirds of Taiwan's GDP that year. Revenues of this magnitude almost reach the individual GDP of China's five richest

provinces.²¹⁰ Taiwan's trade surplus from trade with China (including Hong Kong) reached nearly US\$12.3 billion in 2004, more than twice Taiwan's surplus with the rest of the world. By the end of 2014, Taiwan's trade surplus from trade with the mainland totaled US\$34.1 billion, while its overall trade surplus from global trade was only US\$4.45 billion (in essence, Taiwan runs a trade surplus with the mainland and a trade deficit with the rest of the world).²¹¹ In 2014, Taiwan's foreign direct investment (FDI) on the mainland (US\$10.28 billion) accounted for 58.5 percent of Taiwan's overall FDI (US\$17.57 billion), and this figure does not include Taiwan's indirect investments in China routed through a third country.²¹² Clearly, Taiwan's prosperity is increasingly tied to continued stability in the cross-Strait relationship.

Cross-Strait economic relations also fluctuate with the political trajectory of the bilateral relationship. In the initial period of cross-Strait economic liberalization from 1988-91, Taiwanese investment on the mainland reached US\$2.68 billion, before increasing to US\$5.54 billion in 1992 and then skyrocketing to US\$10 billion in 1993.²¹³ During the tumultuous years of 1995-2000, Taiwanese investment in China plummeted to an average of US\$3.67 billion annually. Then, as the mainland adopted a more open and flexible policy toward Taiwan, Taiwanese investment on the mainland rebounded to US\$10.36 billion in 2005 and has remained steady around this level (US\$9.83 billion as of the end of 2014).²¹⁴

Taiwanese investment has been particularly important to the economies of Jiangsu, Guangdong, Shanghai, and Fujian Provinces, which together received three-quarters of total Taiwanese investment on the mainland from 1991-2015.²¹⁵ Notably, Guangdong and Jiangsu have been China's richest provinces for decades, while Shanghai and

Guangdong remain key power centers in China's domestic politics, as their Party Secretaries are guaranteed seats on the Politburo. The importance of continued investment from these Taiwanese businesses to these provinces' economic health cannot be overstated. From 1979 to 2008, Taiwanese investment accounted for 33.26 percent of Jiangsu's FDI and 14.66 percent of its international trade. Taiwanese businesses in 2008 employed 7.94 percent of Jiangsu's labor force, and from 1992-2007 contributed 3.59 percent of its tax revenues.²¹⁶ From 1979-2008, Taiwanese businesses accounted for 13.75 percent of Guangdong's FDI and 11.22 percent of its international trade, employed 10.99 percent of its labor force, and provided 4.72 percent of its tax revenues. From 1979-2008, Taiwanese businesses accounted for 21.44 percent of Shanghai's FDI and 12.25 percent of its international trade. In 2008, Taiwanese businesses employed 15.66 percent of Shanghai's labor force, while from 1992-2007 they provided 4.89 percent of the city's tax revenue.²¹⁷

As Taiwanese businesses continue to play an important role in driving the economic growth of China's most dynamic and wealthy provinces, officials in these provinces clearly understand the importance of maintaining these businesses' presence and ongoing investment. Bo Zhiyue, a Singapore-based Chinese scholar who specializes in analyzing elite politics, conducted a study that concluded provincial leaders are crucial in Chinese politics, since "China is a country of provinces." Additionally, for these provincial leaders encouraging economic growth is critical, since those "with better economic growth or revenue contribution records during their tenure are less likely to be demoted, and they are also less likely to be retired."²¹⁸ Some Taiwanese businesses, especially those with international recognition or those that manufacture high-tech

products, have particular influence over provincial and municipal leaders. These leaders can showcase such companies' investments as evidence of their effectiveness.²¹⁹ As a result, local governments often cooperate with Taiwanese businesses and "jointly lobby the central government to change policies that disfavor Taiwanese businesses or obtain preferential policies for them."²²⁰

Taiwanese businesses' lobbying power in these provinces and regions is increasingly demonstrated in their ability to help shape China's legislative process. The 1994 "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Investment of Taiwan Compatriots" has been continuously updated and revised based on Taiwanese businesses' needs. In 2010, China's National People's Congress (NPC) sent out an inspection team headed by two Vice Chairmen of the NPC Standing Committee to examine the implementation of the 1994 law and its corresponding regulations, and push through new regulations that TAO had failed to pursue due to its lack of bureaucratic power.²²¹ Taiwanese businesses provided direct input on these measures, not only during the drafting phase, but also as the new laws were implemented and enforced. Additionally, provincial and municipal governments, as well as "democratic parties" such as the bi-monthly consultation mechanism of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, regularly hold seminars, hearings, and debates all aimed at articulating Taiwanese businesses' interests and strategizing how to lobby the mainland to respond to them.²²²

Local governments are not the only actors that favor Taiwanese businesses. According to the State Council's structure, 20 ministries and 15 agencies directly administered by the State Council have an embedded unit or office dedicated to handling its designated functional area specifically as it relates to Taiwan. Such ministries and

agencies cover education, science and technology, minority affairs, public security, civil affairs, justice, finance, environmental protection, transportation, agriculture, commerce, culture, banking and monetary policy, aviation, tourism, and religious affairs.²²³

Government agencies and State-owned enterprises with direct stakes in the cross-Strait relationship have taken a more pragmatic posture toward Taiwan than TAO. One illustrative example of this was the cross-Strait negotiations on transportation. In 1995, the two sides hit an impasse on the characteristics of cross-Strait transportation routes, as the mainland pushed for cross-Strait aviation and sea transport routes to be categorized as “domestic routes,” and wanted to exclude foreign airlines and sea transport companies from running these routes. China’s Ministry of Transportation and its powerful sea transport industry “overrode TAO and obtained the drivers seat in cross-Strait transportation policy,” which led to compromises and significant breakthroughs in the negotiations with Taiwan in 1997.²²⁴ During the deadlock over transportation issues, Beijing insisted on classifying cross-Strait routes as domestic ones, and only wanted to allow mainland- and Taiwan-headquartered shipping companies to participate in such business. Taiwan, however, insisted that the cross-Strait transportation routes be categorized as international ones and foreign airlines be allowed to participate, and rejected the mainland’s proposal on Flag of Convenience (FOC). Taiwan instead insisted that cargo ships transiting between the mainland and Taiwan display their respective national flags. As a compromise, both agreed to only allow container ships registered outside Taiwan and mainland displaying FOCs to transport goods directly between the Kaohsiung Harbor in southern Taiwan and Fuzhou and Xiamen of mainland. Also, the direct route can only be used to transport goods exported or imported from a third place.

Additionally, Beijing categorized the agreement as an “experimental direct transportation”, while Taipei posited it as overseas or offshore (*jingwai*) trans-shipment.²²⁵

It should be noted that all documented examples of Taiwanese businesses successfully lobbying the mainland, or Chinese government officials intervening on policy debates in favor of Taiwanese businesses, have been in the economic and social realm. Businesses are less likely to conduct political lobbying, as this involves higher risks and less concrete rewards. Nonetheless, the multiplication of actors and stakeholders in China’s Taiwan policy has made continuous engagement a more appealing and popular approach, and it is less likely that China’s top leaders will disengage or take a confrontational approach to Taiwan, since such a policy carries with it significant political risks. Additionally, policies such as the timetable strategy, which involve high stakes and high risks, are now more difficult to pass in the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC), since this body has a significant number of members involved in cross-Straits relations. Jiang’s difficulty in obtaining a majority of the CCPCC’s support for the timetable strategy led him to abandon the idea of bringing it before the CCPCC for debate, which eventually prevented the timetable strategy from becoming official policy.²²⁶

Conclusion

This case study is not about how a policy that requires the PLA’s consent is made. Rather, it is about how a policy can fail to be officially adopted, despite the top leader’s desires. The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis created a perfect opportunity for the PLA,

which had up to this point suffered from budget cuts, which resulted in deteriorating hardware and morale. The dishonorable role the military played in the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown further shamed and demoralized the PLA. In 1992, the PLA's routine operation was finally transferred to professionally-oriented officers, which accelerated the crystallization of the PLA's independent institutional interest as well as its pursuit of its interest. The 1995-96 crisis presented the PLA with a cause from which it could regain the public's respect, lobby for increased resources, and boost its soldiers' morale. The crisis also guaranteed that the PLA would regain its voice on Taiwan policy. The PLA was the biggest beneficiary of this crisis, while Jiang Zemin learned that he could not contravene, but rather had to manipulate, the PLA's power to form consensus.

The PLA has always been strongly motivated by the Taiwan issue, which has unparalleled historical significance to all Chinese. All officers interviewed acknowledged that they were not ready militarily in 1995-96. The crisis provided the PLA the greatest benefit in domestic politics – presenting the leadership with convincing evidence that the PLA needed more resources and increased political support for military modernization. The PLA leadership did not display military adventurism during the crisis, even though lower-ranking officers on the frontlines advocated this route. Jiang Zemin took a more opportunistic route, manipulating the calls from a large swath of the PLA for a tougher position on Taiwan to win over the PLA.

Jiang, however, did not solely rely on the PLA to solve the Taiwan problem. Jiang clearly relied on a small circle of advisors, which included both those who emphasized civilian/commercial interests and others who took a more militaristic approach. His push for the timetable strategy was an outgrowth of his political ambition to leave a lasting

personal legacy. With this goal in mind, Jiang pursued a multi-pronged approach on Taiwan: a militaristic approach characterized by the timetable strategy, an acceleration of military preparations, and insistence on the inevitability of a war over Taiwan in closed-door meetings with the PLA;²²⁷ a foreign policy that focused on winning U.S. support to pressure Taiwan; and a push for political negotiations in the context of open and increasing trade and person-to-person exchanges. Jiang was willing to take any course and adopt any combination of policies, as long as it would solve the Taiwan problem and thereby establish his personal legacy.

As one “leg” of Jiang’s two-pronged – engagement and military deterrent – approach, Wang Daohan’s liberal thinking on Taiwan was heavily criticized within the civilian policy circle, primarily by the MFA. As Jiang’s tenure as supreme leader wound down, the emphasis in cross-Straits relations on the military component increased rapidly, due to changes in cross-Straits relations and Jiang’s push for the timetable strategy. The PLA, however, at this point both professional and realistic about military planning, disagreed on the timetable strategy primarily because of the inherent flaws that it identified. The PLA expressed its opposition discreetly, so that it could continue to reap the rewards of sustained tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

On the other hand, exchanges between both sides of the Taiwan Strait increased extraordinarily in the political, economic, and societal spheres. China’s Taiwan policy witnessed the entry of multiple actors that were strongly motivated to depoliticize, open up, and sustain economic and people-to-people exchanges across the Strait. Though TAO and ARATS are leading players in this policy process, local governments, ministries, and SOEs with high stakes in this relationship have exerted influence on and in some cases

even overridden TAO in pushing through agreements between both sides. These forces, which are represented on the CCP Central Committee, constitute the biggest roadblock for any drastic policy that would reverse cross-Strait relations, and therefore any prospect of officially adopting the timetable strategy.

The PLA might not be the primary culprit for Jiang's timetable strategy, but it was at least an accomplice. The difference in the PLA and the civilian advisors' interests centered on the benefits the PLA had obtained by going along with Jiang's timetable proposal. Jiang's proposal fitted well with the PLA's institutional interest of increasing its budget and strengthening its voice on foreign and security policy debates. Sustained perceived threats to its security environment that China encountered during the latter half of the 1990s ensured the PLA would get a seat at the table during Taiwan policy-making. The goal of economic and people-to-people exchanges across the Strait is more elastic and its success more difficult to define during times of sustained security tensions.

In 2002, after Hu took over political leadership from Jiang, China's Taiwan policy took a drastic turn. Hu clearly understood the political consequences if tensions across the Strait persisted. Therefore, Hu had ample reason to shift the cross-Strait relationship to a non-militaristic track. His efforts paid off and Jiang had to step down as CMC Chairman in 2004. China's policy of "peaceful development" with regards to Taiwan, which Hu adopted in 2008, has left the PLA with much less room to maneuver than it had during the mid- to late-1990s. By this point, the Taiwan policy-making process had integrated more stakeholders, which makes any drastic revision of policy a much more difficult, if not impossible, task.

¹ Interview with Shen Dingli, Beijing, 2010.

² The reunification of Taiwan with Mainland will be the biggest political prize for any PRC leader. As a Chinese scholar with previous PLA background said, “no matter it is peaceful reunification or reunification by force, as long as the reunification could be completed, the historic prestige and political legacy of the (PRC) leader would be established.” Interview with a scholar, Shanghai, 2011.

³ Qian Qichen concluded that the U.S. issued the visa to Lee to test Beijing’s bottomline. See Qian Qichen, Qian Qichen, *Ten Episodes in China's Diplomacy* (Beijing: shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2010), pp. 305-308

⁴ There were nine documented secret meetings across the Strait from December 1990 to August 1992. There were a total of 27 documented secret meetings between the two sides, which ended after the “two-States Theory” was proposed by Lee Tenghui in 1999. See “A True Account of Nine Rounds of Secret Cross-Strait talks in Lee Tenghui’s Era,” *Shangyie Zhoukan* (Taiwan’s Business Weekly), No. 661 (24 July 2000), pp. 60-82. In the first meetings, Su Chih-cheng informed Beijing that Lee planned on a trip in Middle East and the US. On high hopes Beijing had for the secret envoy talks in early 1990s, see Su Chi, pp. 7-12; Tzou Jiing-wen, A True Account of Lee-Teng-hui, pp. 179-204.

⁵ In a Xinhua English news report on Hu Jintao’s telephone call with President George W. Bush, Hu explained “the 1992 consensus,” which sees both sides recognize there is only one China, but agree to differ on its definition. See “Chinese, U.S. Presidents Hold Telephone Talks on Taiwan, Tibet,” Xinhua News Agency, March 27, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/27/content_7865209.htm.

⁶ Su Chi and Cheng An-kuo, eds., “yige zhongguo, gezi biaoshu” *Gongshi de Shishi* (“One China, with Respective Interpretations”- A Historical Account of the Consensus of 1992) (Taipei: National Policy Foundation, 2002), p. 40.

⁷ Su Chi, *Taiwan’s Relations with Mainland China: a Tail Wagging Two Dogs* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 14-15.

⁸ During this period, the two sides across the Strait intensified their frictions over “equality, international space and renunciation of force,” three preconditions Lee raised for negotiations with Beijing on reunification. Richard Bush had accurate and extensive analyses of the cross-Strait dynamics in Lee Teng-hui’s presidency since 1988. See Richard Bush, “Lee Teng-hui and ‘Separatism,’” in *Dangerous Strait*, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York, 2005), 77-78.

⁹ On 31 March 1994, 24 Taiwanese tourists, along with eight Mainland tour guides, were killed by three criminals after a robbery. Local government in Zhejiang Province, under the guidance of Beijing, restricted any news report on this incident. It was a prevalent practice by the Chinese government in 1990s to conceal and control information from the Chinese public. However, the lack of transparency and lack of humane responses to the victims’ families was suspected by Taiwanese public that Beijing had something to hide from them. Local police in Zhejiang not only prohibited the Taiwanese reporters to take photos on site but strengthened surveillance on the families of these Taiwanese victims, which arouse public indignations in Taiwan. Although the Mainland identified and captured the three criminals within 17 days after this incident, Lee publicly accused the CCP as “a pile of evil forces that forged a party and acted like gangsters”. Lee’s comment caused the PLA’s strong response, which was only quieted down by Deng. See *Lian He Bao*, April 10, 1994; Fan Lihua, “Study from the 92 Hong Kong Meeting to the First Ku-Wang Meeting,” (master thesis, guoli zhongyang dazue, 2005), <file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/92135029.pdf>; Xu Chunliu, “Taiwanese Tourists Killed in Qiandaohu, Mainland Blocking News Reporting, Leading to Suspension of Cross-Strait Talks,” *xin jing bao*, May 5, 2011, <http://history.people.com.cn/GB/205396/14560574.html>.

¹⁰ China perceived this analogy to Lee Teng-hui’s true intention to lead Taiwan out of China, an accusation Richard Bush believed to be “an over-interpretation”. Bush believed that Lee likened himself as Moses to lead Taiwan out of repression, but not out of China. See Richard Bush, “Lee Teng-hui and ‘Separatism,’” in *Dangerous Strait*, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York, 2005), pp. 77-78.

¹¹ The gist of Jiang’s eight initiatives on Taiwan is “one center, two basic points”: “one center” is the “one China” principle; “two basic points” are “keeping peace”, as both sides across Taiwan Strait are Chinese and Chinese don’t fight Chinese, and “dissolving” of misunderstandings and mistrust between the Chinese across Taiwan Strait through more communications and engagements. See Li Jiaquan, former director of the Institute of Taiwan Studies under Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, “Wang Daohan devising Jiang’s eight points behind the curtain”, *qing nian can kao* (Elite Reference), December 28, 2005.

¹² Su Chi, *Taiwan’s Relations with Mainland China*, pp. 10-11.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Wang Mingyi, "Secret Communications Through Envoys Across The Taiwan Strait For Ten Years," Shanghai fazhi wanbao, December 25, 2008.

¹⁵ Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Lee Teng-Hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 191-193.

¹⁶ Su Chi, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*.

¹⁷ When Taiwan requested for a one-night stay in Hawaii in May 1994, the reluctant State Department allowed Lee's plane to stop at the Hickham Air Force Base, but disallowed him to leave the airport. Lee refused to walk off the plane when meeting an American official. This event was exaggerated on the Capitol Hill into a drama in which the State Department disallowed Lee to walk off the plane. Cassidy & Associates was hired by Taiwanese government to lobby American politicians on policies favorable to Taiwan on average for US\$ 125,00 annually. In 1994, Cassidy obtained a 2.5-million-dollar contract to lobby the U.S. to grant Lee an entry visa. See David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*.

¹⁸ Su Chi, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*.

¹⁹ Secretary of State Warren Christopher had a conversation with Qian Qichen in April 1995 at the United Nations. Then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Winston Lord also gave China assurances that Lee would not be allowed to set foot in the US. However, the US congress passed resolutions in favor of granting Lee the visa, which forced Clinton's hands. See Richard Kagan, *Taiwan's Statesman: Lee Teng-hui and Democracy in Asia* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007). Richard Bush III, a scholar at Brookings Institution, pointed out that Warren Christopher, as a hedge, cautioned Qian that the legislative branch could thwart a US president. However, either Qian did not understand this caveat or he didn't want to be the messenger to carry the bad news to Jiang. Christopher's true message, for some reason, was seemingly not communicated to the Chinese leadership. Therefore, in Beijing's account of events in the 1995 crisis, the US completely contravened its promise and granted Lee the visa. This account could also be seen in: Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 210.

²⁰ James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 330.

²¹ Interview with Chas W. Freeman, Washington DC, February 2014.

²² Interview with Chas W. Freeman, Washington DC, February 2014.

²³ The officer interviewed by the author admitted the clumsiness of conducting military exercises during Taiwan's presidential elections in 1995-96, 2000 and 2004 which had proven repeatedly that military intimidation by the PLA only bolstered the pro-independence force and Taiwanese public's antagonism towards the Mainland. It was the uncertainty factor that made However, he emphasized the hedging utility of having troops in place at least partially in worst scenarios. Interviews with a senior PLA officer with expertise on Taiwan affairs, Beijing, 2013.

²⁴ Robert S. Ross, "The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force", *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall, 2000). pp. 87-123.

²⁵ According to Pang Da-wei, a Taiwanese military intelligence officer, the PLA had on table an assault plan, which was subsequently aborted. Pang turned and subsequently handled PLA Maj. Gen. Liu Liankun who was in charge of armaments division of the PLA's General Logistics Department between 1992 and 1999. There were strong pushes from the PLA hard-liners in August-December 1995 to launch a missile assault against Taiwan. But the majority of senior PLA leaders disagreed on launching a full-scale missile attack so destructive that Taiwan would be "badly broken", its decades-long prosperity damaged. Liu himself even voiced oppositions in internal consultation on the war plan. Then the PLA was prepared to "conduct live ammunition shooting, cross the middle line of Taiwan Strait, combine with submarines, and occupy the periphery islands of Taiwan" in its first military exercise in 1996 coded as "96-I Exercise", an operation with "a budget of 4 billion yuan". PLA Major General Liu Liankun revealed to Taiwanese military intelligence officer not only the CMC's real war plan, its bottom line but the relevant military deployment. Pang claimed that Liu's intelligence was passed on to the U.S. by Taiwan. The U.S. disbelieved Taiwan's intelligence in the beginning and sent out two Americans to China's coastal regions to validate Taiwan's information. Both Americans were captured by China. All of the above probably contributed to the decision by the U.S. to send two aircraft carriers to Taiwan Strait, at least in Pang's view. In late 1995, Liu Liankun told Taiwan that the missiles the PLA used in 1995 were unarmed. Therefore, when inquired by Lee Teng-hui whether Taiwan's presidential election shall be held on time, Yin Zongwen

(殷宗文), who headed Taiwan's military intelligence bureau, informed Lee of this intel and suggested to hold presidential election as planned. However, Lee Teng-hui revealed this crucial intel to assure voters to vote for him, an information only very few senior PLA officers knew. This development, combined with intelligence Beijing learned potentially from its own spy within Taiwan's military intelligence apparatus such as Li Zhihao, that its war plan, details of the deployments of its fighters and submarines, radar, missile and ammunition supply facilities and bottom line were leaked to Taiwan, led the PLA to rescind the original war plan. Liu was investigated, convicted and executed in 1999 by lethal injection. Pang blamed Lee Teng-hui for the loss of Liu, a highly valuable intelligence asset for Taiwan. Pang wrote the book when he was fatally ill with leukemia. He was convicted twice by High Court of Taiwan for leaking sensitive information by publishing the book that documented how he recruited and handled Liu in between 1992 and 1999 as well as four other books which were never publicly released after publication. The PLA's assault plan on taking over periphery islands of Taiwan by the PLA was dismissed by knowledgeable American expert as "highly unlikely" and thus "not credible". None of the current and former US official has ever indicated or confirmed this argument. None of the PLA officers the author interviewed confirmed Pang's argument as the PLA "was truly not ready militarily in 1996". Li Zhihao, the double agent whose allegiance was placed with Beijing, was detected by Pang and eventually exposed and sentenced to life imprisonment in Taiwan. See Pang Jiajun (Pennname for Pang Da-wei), qing bao zha ji. , according to Pang Da-wei when talking to the "g2", a Japanese magazine; Brian Hsu, "Ex-spy barred from Beijing trip," *Taipei Times*, June 29, 2001, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2001/06/29/0000091967>; "Japanese media interviewed Pang Da-wei, Taiwan's former military intelligence officer," Duowei News, <http://www.backchina.com/news/2010/09/08/104565.html>; Dong Jiayao, "Taiwan military intelligence officer convicted for publishing books on turning (of PLA Major General Liu Liankun)", Junqing Guancha Shi, *Phoenix Satellite TV*, November 23, 2007; and Pan Yan, "Enemies of the State", *Global Times*, February 14, 2011, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/622580/Enemies-of-the-State.aspx>; Gao Youzhi and Lv Zhaolong, "Pang Da-wei explains how the PLA Major General Liu Liankun was turned", *zhongguo shibao* (China Times), December 1, 2007, <http://info.51.ca/news/china/2007/12/01/141871.shtml>; "The PLA spy had a wide guanxi network in the military", *Singtao Daily*, June 23, 2012, <http://news.singtao.ca/vancouver/2012-06-23/china1340442137d3937096.html>; "Complete Story of the Case of Major General Liu Liankun," *VOA Chinese*, April 13, 2014, <http://www.voachinese.com/content/taiwan-spy-in-china-20140413/1892276.html>.

²⁶ A reliable account of this period of relationship was written by Su Chi. See Su Chi, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, pp. 10-12.

²⁷ The PLA participants include Major General Ye Xuanning, director of the PLA GPD's Liaison Division and son of Marshal Ye Jianying, and Senior Colonel Chang Yansheng. See Tzou Jiing-wen, *A True Account of Lee Teng-hui in Power*; "Ten Years of Secret Envoy Communication between Lee Teng-hui and Jiang Zemin," *China Times*, January 16, 2005.

²⁸ The earliest mainland participants of the secret-envoy communications across the Strait included Yang Side, Director of Taiwan Affairs Office and Jia Yibin, Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, a democratic party in mainland China. Then Wang Daohan and Xu Mingzhen were added into the dialogues. The Taiwanese secret envoy was Su Chih-cheng, a student of Nan and also friend of Lee Teng-hui's son. See Zhou Ruijin, formerly deputy editor-in-chief of People's Daily, "Nan Huai-chin: Messenger for Cooperation of the Nationalist and Communist Party," *wen shi can kao*, Issue 20 of 2011, <http://m.wmwk.org/html5/Default.aspx?Id=486676>.

²⁹ Wang Mingyi, "Arms sales to Taiwan brings in talks across Taiwan Strait?", *zhong guo shi bao* (China Times), October 6, 2008, <http://www.cetin.net.cn/cetin2/servlet/cetin/action/HtmlDocumentAction;jsessionid=49C47F02345B1614F09737B571C93BB9?baseid=1&docno=359905>.

³⁰ Su Chih-cheng (蘇志誠) Director of Lee Teng-hui's office, and Zeng Qinghong, Jiang Zemin's main deputy, met for three times in Zhuhai of Guangdong Province and Macao, on April 4 and November 25 of 1994 and then March 1995. The other secret envoy Lee Teng-hui had was Cheng Shu-min, a student of Nan, during this period.

³¹ Zhou Ruijin, "Nan Huai-chin."

³² Su Chi, *Taiwan's Relations with Mainland China*, pp. 8-12.

³³ Su Chih-cheng and Cheng Shu-min were put on trials in 2001 for acting as secret envoy across the Strait, therefore violating Taiwan's National Security Law. During the trial, Su expressed that during the secret-envoy dialogue in 1995, the two sides reached a tacit agreement on launching naming-calling games as a public play. "Secret Envoys Across the Taiwan Strait Under Investigation," *China Times*, January 22, 2011,

³⁴ Tang Shubei came to Taipei for the 11th meeting with his Taiwanese counterpart mainly for the negotiations on the repatriation of illegal immigrants, fishing disputes and hijacking. Tang visited Taipei also to set the stage for the upcoming second Wang-Koo talks that would have taken place in Taipei.

³⁵ *Lian He Bao*, May 27, 1995, A2.

³⁶ This assessment was expressed by Major General Wang Zaixi, who was the leading expert on Taiwan affairs and played a crucial role in the relevant intelligence assessment under the PLA GSD's Second Department (intelligence). Because of Wang's crucial role in the PLA's intelligence system in 1990s, we could reasonably take his opinions as the assessment of the PLA on Taiwan. See Wang Zaixi, *Review of Cross-Strait Situations* (Beijing: Huayi Chubanshe, 1996), p. 81.

³⁷ See Wang Zaixi, *Cross-Strait Situations*, pp. 81-82 and 130.

³⁸ See Wang Zaixi, *Cross-Strait Situations*, pp. 162-164.

³⁹ "Experts and Analysts Convened in Beijing to Discuss about Taiwan," December 20, 1994, *People's Daily*, pp. 3, <http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmr/1994-12-22-3>.

⁴⁰ Wang Zhaoguo, Minister of the Central Department of United Front, was quoted in a meeting with Shao Zonghai on 31 October 1994. See Shao Zonghai, *Research Into Cross-Strait Relations* (Taipei: wunan tushu chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 2006), pp. 580.

⁴¹ Wang Daohan urged the two sides across the Strait to hold talks over ending hostilities on a press release on 20 March 1995. See Wang Meihui and Zhang Shengdai, "Wang Daohan: Two Sides Across the Strait Shall End Hostility, Expect Taiwan to Come to Talk," *lian he bao*, Marcy 21, 1995, pp. 4; Shao Zonghai, *Research Into Cross-Strait Relations* (Taipei: wunan tushu chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 2006), pp. 581.

⁴² Ending hostilities shall be naturally combined with signing a ceasefire agreement and establishing military confidence-building measures (CBMs), all part of mandates of the PLA.

⁴³ One indicator of such divergence in assessment could be found from the writings of Li Jiaquan and Liu Yingxian, both of whom worked for the Institute of Taiwan Studies (ITS) under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), in contrast with the chapter written by Wang Zaixi, a senior officer at the PLA GSD 2nd Department. Although ITS is officially affiliated with CASS, it has been largely independent of the administration and funding of CASS. Instead, ITS receives funding and administrative guidance from Ministry of State Security (MSS) and remains the most influential government think tank on Taiwan. In 1990s, analysts of the PLA GSD 2nd Department and GPD Foreign Liaison Department who work on Taiwan affairs use identities as analysts of ITS of CASS when receiving interviews from the media. These military analysts do not receive administrative guidance from MSS. See Jiang Dianming, ed., "Taiwan in 1994," (Beijing: Huayi Chubanshe, 1995), pp. 1-26, 40-47; Wang Mingyi, "Sketch of Think Tanks under the Mainland Party, Government and Military System," *zhong guo shi bao* (China Times), May 18, 1998, <http://forums.chinatimes.com/report/trackII/87051101.htm>.

⁴⁴ See Wang Zaixi, *Cross-Strait Situations*, pp. 151-4.

⁴⁵ "Deng Rong Said That Deng Xiaoping is Worsened in Health," *lianhe wanbao* (United Evening News), January 13, 1995), pp. 1.

⁴⁶ This view was widely held by the PLA officers. Interviews with multiple PLA officers, 2012-2015.

⁴⁷ Interview with a diplomat at MFA, Beijing, 1995.

⁴⁸ MFA failed to set up the Jiang-Clinton meeting despite months of trying. Jiang visited Moscow on 7-9 May, deliberately overlapping briefly with Clinton who visited Moscow on 9-11 May 1995. See "Top-level Visits and Meetings between China and Russia, Xinhua News Agency, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-11/27/content_642586.htm; Travels of President William J. Clinton, Office of the Historian under U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/departments/history/travels/president/clinton-william-j>; "China Vs. American," *Businessweek*, July 23, 1995.

⁴⁹ A New York Times editorial on 10 May said: "Washington has only marginal influence over China's succession politics, exercised mainly through the prestige it can confer on contenders by treating them as world leaders. President Clinton made the right call when he decided to avoid meeting privately with Mr. Jiang while both are in Moscow this week. Scrupulous neutrality is the wisest policy for protecting

American interests in a highly uncertain Chinese future.” See “China's Power Struggle”, *New York Times*, May 10, 1995, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/10/opinion/china-s-power-struggle.html>;

⁵⁰ Interview with a scholar who headed a militarily-affiliated entity and was close to Nanjing Military Region, Shanghai, summer of 2011. A retired senior PLA officer, the author interviewed in 2013, disagreed with the conclusion made by this scholar because he believed the influence of subordinate unit such as the military regions would ever be tolerated by the military leadership. In this PLA officer's explanation, it is against military discipline for junior officers of the front-line military regions to exert any influence.

⁵¹ Ye Fei, Zhang Aiping and Zhang Zhen all had strong motivations to see Mainland's reunification with Taiwan due to their personal experiences. The assaults led by Ye Fei in October 1949, so-called Kimen Battle, led to catastrophic failures and annihilation of three regiments under the 28th Army, which totaled almost 10,000 PLA soldiers, constituting the biggest failure since the established of the PLA (Red Army). Zhang Aiping, Chief of Operations of Huadong Military Zone, together with Ye Fei and Chen Yi, proposed to attack Kimen in 1953. Due to internal disagreements led by Zhang Zhen, Chief of the Operations Department of GSD, Zhang Aiping was assigned to assault and seize Yijiangshan and Dachen Islands near the shore of Zhejiang Province. Mao ordered Zhang Zhen in July 1954 to draft war plans to assault Taiwan while Zhang Aiping was appointed as Commander of East Zhejiang Frontline Command. The battle of Yijiangshan Island commanded by Zhang Aiping was the first success of joint operations of the PLA. Assigning Zhang Zhen to draft war plans on Taiwan was probably an effort of Mao to assuage the dispute between Zhang Aiping and Zhang Zhen, as the PLA didn't have any airport in Fujian and therefore had no air superiority over the Taiwan Strait. See Zhang Zhen, *Memoir of Zhang Zhen*, pp. 492-493; Wang Yan, ed., *Chronology of Peng Dehua* (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 1998), pp. 573.

⁵² Zhang Aiping, “Preface by Zhang Aiping”, in Hubei Academy of Social Sciences ed., *Splendid Portrait of Nationalism* (Wuhan, Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 2005), pp. 9-11.

⁵³ Swaine, “Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan”, pp. 319-327.

⁵⁴ “CMC Vice Chairman Liu Huaqing Called For ‘Completion of Reunification of China Through The Third KMT-CCP Cooperation,’” *lianhe zaobao*, August 2 1995, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/lhzb19950802-1.2.28.9.aspx>.

⁵⁵ Ting Chen-wu, “Hawks Dominate China's Policy Toward Taiwan,” *Hsin Pao*, March 14, 1996, in FBIS March 21, 1996, pp. 12-13. Andrew Scobell, “Show of Force: The PLA and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis,” Selected Publication of the Asia/Pacific Research Center of Stanford University, January 1999. Also in June Jiang Zemin made a self-criticism at a meeting of the Central Military Commission, taking responsibility for mistakes in Beijing's policy toward Taiwan. David Shambaugh, “China's Commander-in-Chief: Jiang Zemin and the PLA,” in C. Dennison Lane, Mark Weisenbloom, and Dimon Liu, eds., *China's Military Modernization* (New York and Washington, D.C.: Kegan Paul International and American Enterprise Institute Press, 1996), p. 210.

⁵⁶ Zheng Ming, former chief of the PLA Navy Armament Department and Admiral Liu Huaqing's subordinate, recounted in an article that “then Central leadership pursued stable international environment and therefore Liu Huaqing's strategic vision of developing aircraft carrier were not accepted by the above (political leader).” In the same article, Zheng Ming also revealed his role in writing Liu Huaqing's memoir. “After Liu Huaqing was retired in 1998, his memoir writing started. I also attended the compilation of Liu Huaqing's Memoir and wrote a large volume of Liu Huaqing's efforts of developing naval armaments. However, the (book) memoir only adopted a portion of what I wrote,” said Zheng Ming. See Li Xiang and Zheng Ming, “Liu Huaqing: Won't Rest In Peace without Seeing China's Aircraft Carrier”, *wenshi cankao zazhi*, issue 14 of 2011, <http://blog.ifeng.com/article/12540050.html>.

⁵⁷ Interview with a senior military officer, 2012.

⁵⁸ Both Zhang Zhen and Zhang Wannian were closely connected with Zhang Aiping.

⁵⁹ Lampton wrote, based on his interview with a senior PLA officer in 2011, that the PLA had “a sort of fixed slice of the GDP, 1.2 to 1.4 percent of GDP for the last twenty years”, 1991-2011, and that “it (the PLA) had asked for 3 percent, but that had been turned down.” See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*.

⁶⁰ China's military burden at 2-2.1 percent of GDP since 2004 is lower than the global average of 2.4 percent of GDP, lower than that of the USA, Russia, the UK, France, Saudi Arabia and India, but higher than that of Japan, Germany and Italy. See Sam Perlo-Freeman, “Mar. 2014: Deciphering China's latest defence budget figures,” an essay on SIPRI website, <http://www.sipri.org/media/newsletter/essay/perlo->

[freeman-mar-2013](#). Also See Petter Staltenheim, Damien Fruchart, Wuyi Omitoogun and Catalina Perdomo, 'Military Expenditure', in *Stockholm International Peace Institute Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press on behalf of SIPRI, June 2006), pp. 295-324, <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006/files/SIPRIYB0608.pdf>.

⁶¹ In comparison, Jiang's moderate "Eight Points" on Taiwan in early 1995 was based on his civilian political advisor Wang Daohan and did not consider the PLA's voices.

⁶² Jiang Zemin played a decisive role in handling the 1996 crisis. The CMC initially planned to use a whole army corps (*jituanjun*) to conduct the military exercise. Jiang vetoed the proposal with the argument of "too drastic acts will create opposite desired effects." Instead, two divisions were sent in for the military exercise. See Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China*, pp. pp. 279-80.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Deng said, "It will take a long time to resolve the Taiwan question; we should not be impatient for quick results... What to do if Taiwan authority refuses to negotiate with us forever? Shall we give up unification of our country? Of course, (we) shall not use force willfully because our energy shall focus on economic construction and the unification (between Taiwan and the mainland), even if coming late, doesn't hurt our overall situation. However, we cannot exclude the use of force. We have to bear that in mind and our next generation shall bear it in mind. This is strategic thinking." See *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol 3 (1982-1992), PP. 86 and 87, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1280.html>.

⁶⁵ See "Jiang Zemin Answers Journalists on Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," *People's Daily*, September 27, 1989, <http://rm1946.info/simple/index.php?t840786.html>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

⁶⁸ Patrick E. Tyler, "China Hints at a Timetable To Take Control of Taiwan", *New York Times*, January 31, 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/31/world/china-hints-at-a-timetable-to-take-control-of-taiwan.html>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See "Jiang Zemin Answers Journalists on Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," *People's Daily*, September 27, 1989, <http://rm1946.info/simple/index.php?t840786.html>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

⁷³ Jiang Zemin told President Clinton, "Frankly, the Taiwan problem cannot be dragged on forever. There must be a timetable... I hope the US government would weigh the costs and benefits and clearly indicate its support for China's reunification." Jiang's talk about the "timetable" idea was not publicized on the Chinese side until 2006 when *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* was published. See "The Principle and Position in Resolving the Taiwan Problem" (27 June 1998), in CCP Central Committee, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol. 2, pp. 154.

⁷⁴ Jiang Zemin told the Associated Press in an interview, "China wants a peaceful reconciliation but the question should not remain unsettled for too long." See "Jiang says floods won't affect Chinese economy", AP, August 26, 1998.

⁷⁵ Jiang Zemin said, "The Taiwan problem cannot be dragged on for too long. It after all needs a timetable. It is of paramount importance to the reality and far-reaching importance to the history (of China) to devise a correct timetable for solving the Taiwan problem, intensify preparations for solving the Taiwan problem as early as possible and smoothly realizing China's socialist modernization." See Luo Zhenjian, "China Needs a Timetable to Solve the Taiwan Problem," *website of China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification*, June 4, 2008,

http://www.zhongguotongcuhui.org.cn/hxzh/201210/t20121022_3210805.html; "The Insistence and Adjustments of the CCP's Taiwan Policy," KMT Department of Mainland Affairs, *Dalu Qingshi Shuangzhoubao* (Mainland Situation Biweekly), April 23, 2003, pp. 22.

⁷⁶ "Chen Yunlin: Broaden Exchanges to Promote Understand and the Process of the Peaceful Reunification", *renmin ribao* (People's Daily), January 4, 1999, pp. 1.

⁷⁷ *Central News Agency* (7 March 1999).

⁷⁸ "To Seize the Preparatory Works for An Early Resolution of the Taiwan Problem," *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), March 13, 2000, pp. 3.

⁷⁹ “Pay Close Attention to Preparations for the Early Settlement of the Taiwan Issue,” *People’s Daily*, March 13, 2000, <http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/zgrdxw/lianghui/news/0313/031307.html>.

⁸⁰ Yun-han Chu, “Power Transition and the Making of Beijing’s Policy Towards Taiwan”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 176 (Dec., 2003), pp. 960-80.

⁸¹ David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, p. 159.

⁸² Interview with a senior PLA officer who has been involved in Taiwan policy since mid 1990s, Beijing, January 2013.

⁸³ See *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol 1, pp. 285.

⁸⁴ As the proportion of subsidy or income outside salary increased from 8.9% in 1985 to 34.5% in 1997 for urban residents, civil servants in municipal and provincial governments earned in subsidy in 1993 totaled 449 yuan in Beijing, 663 yuan in Shanghai, 463 yuan in Guangdong, 480 yuan in Jiangsu, 235 yuan in Shandong, 253 yuan in Shaanxi, but only 42 yuan for military personnel. If following China’s consumer price index (CPI) which increased annually at 13.9% on average between 1993 and 1996, salary of military personnel should have increased by 100-230 yuan. However, during this period, military personnel’s salary increased between 12-42 yuan annually on average, therefore at an annual growth rate of only 4.8%. According to a survey conducted with 500 officers below the regiment level, 27% of them wanted to be decommissioned as soon as possible and among them, 48% of officers wanted to do so because of dissatisfaction with their income. The author suspected the survey was conducted not based on randomly selected samples. See Liu Shuyun, “The Adjustment and Guidance of Soldiers’ Interests under Market Economy” (master thesis, Wuhan University, May 2005).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Yuan Mingquan, “Income Contrast and Income Relation Coordination of Officers and Civilians,” *jun shi jing ji yan jiu* 6 (1999), pp. 31-33.

⁸⁷ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing’s Memoir*, pp. 584-5.

⁸⁸ China’s consumer price index (CPI) increased annually at 13.9% on average between 1993 and 1996. Another indicator for the high inflation rate is the income growth of urban residents. The total income of civilian officials on average increased 38 times or grew at a growth rate of 24% annually between 1978 and 1995. See Yuan Mingquan, “Income Contrast” *jun shi jing ji yan jiu*.

⁸⁹ Interview with You Ji, Beijing, June 2013; interview with a senior PLA officer in 2014.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Zhang Zhen, “Review of the reform of military building in the new era”, *PLA Daily*, January 13, 2009, p. 11, http://www.chinamil.com.cn/site1/xwpdxw/2009-01/13/content_1617276_7.htm.

⁹² Zhang Wannian more pointed raised questions which need to be answered by the new strategic guideline of the PLA: whom to fight? Where? What kind of wars? And how to fight these wars? The new PLA strategic guideline, “winning a localized war under high and new technology”, clearly serves the goal of “protecting (China’s) territory, sovereignty and maritime interests” and “protecting (China’s) unification and social stability”. Zhang Wannian, *Zhang Wannian’s Biography*, pp. 61-5.

⁹³ Speech of Admiral Liu Huaqing entitled with “Naval Strategy and Future Sea-borne War-fighting,” April 29, 1986.

⁹⁴ James Mulvenon had an excellent discussion about this topic. See James Charles Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978–1998* (Armonk, New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), pp. 192-194.

⁹⁵ Western analysts such as Ellis Joffe pointed out that the professionalism of the PLA greatly strengthened in the 1980s and 1990s, which is in general accurate. However, the PLA’s professionalization accelerated notably in the 1990s in comparison to that in the 1980s. One evidence for this conclusion is that, from 1978 to 1985, the PLA delayed for seven years to change its strategic direction. Such a long delay could be partly explained by the separateness and autonomy of the PLA’s decision-making system, partly by the inert and chaotic mindset of the PLA after decades of political disturbance and damage. “After the Party and the country shifted their focuses of work to economic development, our military did not sit down to carefully examine the questions such what we shall do in peacetime,” agreed by the PLA CMC in self-reflection in 1984 and 1985. See Ellis Joffe, *The Political Angle – New Phenomena in Party-Army Relations*, in Larry M. Wortzel, ed., *The Chinese Armed Forces in the 21st Century* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute of U.S. Army War College, 1999), pp. 321-8; “CMC leaders’ speeches in CMC meetings in November 1984 and

the CMC extended meeting in 1985”, from PLA NDU Teaching and Research Material (military version), Issue 3 of 1987.

⁹⁶ The percentage of younger officers (aging between 45 and 57), who had attended one of the three institutions (a command school, military technical school or nonmilitary college) increased from 78% in 1989 to 94% in 1994. In 1994, 94% of officers aging between 45 and 57 attended one of the above three institutions while only 74% of officers aging between 58 and 63 and 80% of those aging between 74 and 75 did so. See James C. Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer: Trends and Implications* (RAND: Santa Monica, 1997), pp. 17-18.

⁹⁷ Swaine, *Military and Political Succession in China*, pp. 160-161.

⁹⁸ The “two urgent challenges for the PLA Navy in the 1990s existed: first, whether the PLAN could employ its inferior armaments to fight a far superior opponent with high-tech advantage; second, whether the PLAN could quickly upgrade the technological added-value of its naval armaments to adapt to the requirements of future regional wars under high-tech conditions. These two challenges constituted two fundamental drivers for China’s navy to transform its strategy and relevant application.” See Col. Wang Zaiqing, “Analysis of transformation of the application of China’s navy strategy”, *Military History magazine*, Issue 3 of 1999, pp. 34-37.

⁹⁹ The Yinhe Incident in 1993, described in greater details in previous chapters, took place in which the U.S. searched a Chinese container ship that it suspected of transporting “sensitive material” to Iran.

¹⁰⁰ Then CMC Vice Chairman Admiral Liu Huaqing listed two reasons that drove him to pursue aircraft carriers and one reason was the humiliation from the Yinhe Incident.

¹⁰¹ This could be best illustrated by a popular military song, What Soldiering Is For. The lyrics say, “What soldiering is for, you talk about it and he talks about it. Soldiering is for protecting your families and safeguarding your motherland. It is good and joyful to be a soldier, as the time in service is full of glory and vigor.” See Yi Min and Yan Su (writer) and Meng Qingyun (composer), *dang bing ganshenme* (What Soldiering Is For), <http://www.9ku.com/geci/983.htm>.

¹⁰² Professionalization of the military normally aims to improve the military’s capacity to carry out its mission and increase members’ discipline and accountability for their actions. To maximize the military professionalization, not only educational and training programs have to be strengthened while increasing rewards (salaries and benefits) for improved training and standards. The low pay of the soldiers and officers would hamper the professionalization of the army. See William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992); Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹⁰³ Yu Mingxian, “Deng Xiaoping’s innovation in his military theory inherited from Mao Zedong thought”, *PLA Daily*, <http://www.pladaily.com.cn/item2/dxp/jnwz/047.htm>; See Su Tairen, *Whole Record of Deng Xiaoping's Life* (Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Deng Xiaoping Nianpu, 1975–1997 [Chronicles of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1997] (Beijing: Zhongyang. Wenxian Chubanshe, 2004), 494.

¹⁰⁵ Deng Xiaoping Nianpu, 621; In 1989, Deng more resolutely concluded that world wars can be avoided, and thus ascertain peace and development as two major theme of world politics.

¹⁰⁶ *Hong Xuezhì's Memoir*, pp. 716.

¹⁰⁷ Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., “Preventing War in the Taiwan Strait: Restraining Taiwan and Beijing,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1998.

¹⁰⁸ PLA Academy of Military Sciences Department of Warfighting Theories, *New Annotation of Sun Tzu's Art of War* (Beijing, zhonghua shuju, 1977), p. 45.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with a military strategist who is a senior active-duty officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

¹¹¹ Deng Xiaoping, “Current Situation and Missions,” a speech Deng gave on 16 January 1980, from Deng Xiaoping’s *Selected Works*, Volume II (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 2010), 239-241.

¹¹² Interview with a senior PLA Naval officer, Beijing, 1997.

¹¹³ Interview with a retired PLA naval officer, 2013.

¹¹⁴ This conclusion was made based on the author’s interviews with multiple PLA officers from 1997 to 2013.

¹¹⁵ Interview with a senior PLA Naval officer, Beijing, 1997.

¹¹⁶ Jiang Zemin spoke in the extended meeting of the CMC in January 1993 and emphasized the two-prong direction of military deterrent and political/economic/cultural engagements with Taiwan. Jiang said, “the focus of our military preparations currently and in the near future is to prevent Taiwan from entering significant incidents towards ‘Taiwan independence.’ In order to prevent any damage to our sovereignty and territorial integrity. While playing the role of military deterrent and making serious preparations for any contingency to prevent separatism of the ‘Taiwan independence’ force, the PLA shall actively support the Party and the government’s role in strengthening (the mainland’s) appeal and influence in realms of politics, economy, culture, science and technology.” See Jiang Zemin, “International Situation and Military Strategic Guideline,” January 13, 1993 in Jiang Zemin, *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol. pp. 278-294.

¹¹⁷ Interview with a Beijing-based scholar on Taiwan studies, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹¹⁸ Dongxiang, August 1990.

¹¹⁹ Political tradition on China’s policy-making is that whoever has it in his portfolio will have the final say (*youshui fenguan, youshui shuolesuan*). Moreover, given Yang Shangkun’s senior position in the Party and actual control over the PLA, Jiang would have little chance of asserting himself in the Taiwan affairs under Yang.

¹²⁰ Chi Su, *Taiwan’s Relations with Mainland China: A Tail Wagging Two Dogs* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 32.

¹²¹ TALSG in 1993 was headed by Jiang (head) and included Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (deputy head), Wang Zhaoguo, Director of Taiwan Affairs Office, Jia Chunwang, Minister of State Security, Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff and Wang Daohan, President of ARATS. See Guo Ruihua, *Introduction to Organizational System of the CCP’s Taiwan Affairs* (Taipei, fawubu diaochaju, 2004), pp. 87.

¹²² *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, vol., pp. 421-422.

¹²³ Su admitted to paving the way to the first ever cross-strait talks held in Singapore in 1993, between China’s Wang Daohan and his Taiwanese counterpart Koo Chen-fu. See “Lee sent secret envoys to China”, *Taipei Times*, July 20, 2000, p. 4, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/local/archives/2000/07/20/0000044446>.

¹²⁴ Jiang chose Singapore over Hong Kong was to avoid the original secret envoy route across the Strait under Yang Shangkun. See Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping*. Part of the book’s excerpts could be read at Chengming Magazine’s website: <http://www.chengmingmag.com/cm385/385spfeature/spfeature09.html>.

¹²⁵ Jiang even held a meeting in Zhongnanhai in 1996 to specially discuss about the temperature adjustment of the outpatients branch of the PLA General Hospital which mostly hosted decorated revolutionary officers. See Cao Zhi and Xu Jinzhang, “Documentary on How Comrade Jiang Zemin Was Concerned About the Construction of the PLA General Hospital,” Xinhua News Agency, August 3, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper39/9829/903572.html>.

¹²⁶ “Jiang Zemin’s Views on Stabilizing the Regime By Stabilizing the Military,” *lianhe zaobao*, June 7, 1995, p. 13.

¹²⁷ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2012.

¹²⁸ Interview with You Ji, Beijing, June 2013.

¹²⁹ Jiang Zemin proposed the idea of building “assassin’s mason” type of armaments, i.e. high-tech weapon systems that could truly intimidate enemies. See Chen Yongyi, “‘Assassin’s Mason’ and Defeating The Enemy Without Combat”, paper for the 8th conference of Association of Studies of Sun Tzu’s Art of War, February 20/2012, <http://www.szbf.cn/Item/1177.aspx>.

¹³⁰ Interviews with multiple PLA officers, 2012-2015.

¹³¹ Jiang’s talk with President Clinton in June 1998 was not publicized until 2005 when Jiang Zemin’s *Selected Works* was published.

¹³² Interview with multiple former and active-duty PLA officers, 2014 and 2015.

¹³³ If the PBSC cannot reach a consensus on a major issue, some members may propose that the central leadership call a plenary session of the Politburo for its approval of highly significant or controversial proposals. See Lewis, John and Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 89-91.

¹³⁴ Interview with a former PLA officer who was involved in Taiwan affairs, 2015.

¹³⁵ Lin Weiyin, “Mainland Affairs Brief,” website of Mainland Affairs Council of Republic of Taiwan, February 1999.

¹³⁶ The F-16s Taiwan obtained from the U.S. in early 1990s and Mirage 2000 Taiwan obtained from France helped Taiwan greatly enhanced Taiwan’s air power respectively in 1998 and in 2001. Therefore, the PLA was in military disadvantage during this period. This relative military disadvantage across the Strait was reversed by 2005 when the PLA Air Force deployed a series of fighters including J-10s, according to an interview with a retired PLA officer.

¹³⁷ Interview with

¹³⁸ Jiang Zemin helped Cao Gangchuan elevate into the CMC and get promoted to full general by establishing General Armament Department in 1998, which was headed by Cao. Jiang then promoted both Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou to be members of the CMC and then full generals in 1999. Normally, those who did not retire in the new CMC team have a chance to become the CMC Vice Chairman. Therefore, Cao, Guo and Xu were put on the promotion track when Jiang paved the foundations by elevating them into the CMC first. Once they became members of the CMC, they would face a much more relaxed retirement restriction: if they reach 67 at the time of transition of the CMC team, they could remain in the CMC; if they reach 68 then, they have to retire, which is not stipulated in law and regulation, but an unwritten rule for senior cadre and military leaders. Senior PLA officers at the level Military Region Principal (*zheng da jun qu*) who are not members of the CMC would retire at 65. Cao was 63 when elevated into the CMC in 1998 and Guo was 57 and Xu was 56 when elevated into the CMC in 1999.

¹³⁹ This rectification was made by President Clinton based on the advice of Richard Bush, his AIT Washington Director. See Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “Strategic Ambiguity or Strategic Clarity”, in Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, ed., *Dangerous Strait: The US-Taiwan-China Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 200 and 260. Also, Three Nos was partially revised in a less noticeable speech Clinton made at University of Pennsylvania. See Charles Babington, “Clinton Urges Trade, Shrinking U.S. Debt,” *Washington Post* (February 25, 2000), A4.

¹⁴⁰ General Liu Yazhou indicated that Jiang expressed his view that the war across Taiwan Strait is inevitable. See Liu Yazhou. “A Review of the Jinmen [Quemoy] Campaign,” <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/2882.html>.

¹⁴¹ Arguably, more PLA officers believe in the inevitability of the war across the Strait. The PLA in general held two fundamental beliefs on the Taiwan problem: first, peace unification with Taiwan only means a slow independence of Taiwan; whatever cannot be achieved on the battlefield between China and Taiwan won’t be achieved on the diplomatic negotiation table. However, devil is in the details. There are major disagreements in the PLA on a wide range of questions about how to start and fight this war, including whether the PLA shall preempt without provocations, whether the PLA shall have a timetable, whether the PLA shall use missiles in the attacks or just for intimidation, and etc.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Interviews with multiple senior PLA officers, 2013-2015.

¹⁴⁴ Private conversation with a senior PLA Navy officer, PLA National Defense University, Beijing, December 1997.

¹⁴⁵ J-11 [Su-27 FLANKER], Website of Federation of American Scientists, <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/china/aircraft/j-11.htm>.

¹⁴⁶ David A. Shlapak et al., *A Question of Balance—Political Context and Military Aspects of the China-Taiwan Dispute* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2009), pp. 101-111.

¹⁴⁷ Xu Yan, “Military Modernization Cannot Be Purchased: Development Process of New China’s Armaments,” *China Youth Daily*, May 6, 2011, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_7bf69ea901015ikl.html.

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with several senior PLA officers, 2012-2014.

¹⁴⁹ Interviews with PLA officers, China’s defense industry officials, and retired rocket and space scientist with the PLA General Armament Department, Beijing, 2011-2015.

¹⁵⁰ The overall funds outside China’s official fiscal budget averages about 800 billion yuan a year, based on the author’s interviews with knowledgeable government officials and PLA officers. Although the PLA always has a cut of this pie, arguably it varies year by year depending on both justifiable causes the PLA lays out and the top political leader’s support for its claim.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Hu Feijun and Wu Zepeng, “China’s Aviation Manufacturing Industry Hopeful to Excel Russia And Become the Third Pollar,” *meiri jingji xinwen*, November 28, 2014, <http://mil.huanqiu.com/aerospace/2014-11/5219469.html>.

¹⁵³ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Year Book 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁴ Lampter used “two centers” to describe this problem. The author uses “two headquarters” instead to avoid confusion with another “two centers” problem –economic development and military preparations. David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, pp. 172-3.

¹⁵⁵ China’s Constitution stipulates two terms as the maximum length for presidency.

¹⁵⁶ For example, Xu Caihou, director of GPD and member of the CMC, urged the PLA to study and implement Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents” as a long-term strategic task when visiting local troops in Shaanxi and Gansu in September 2003. See “Xu Caihou: Bring the Study and Implementation of A New Upsurge of the ‘Three Represents’ In Depth,” *Xinhua News Agency*, September 24, 2003, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2003-09-24/151833.html>; “Cao Gangchuan Visiting Marching Bands,” PLA Daily, January 18, 2004, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2004-01-18/1026177874.html>;

¹⁵⁷ Interview with a retired senior PLA officer, 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Tzong-Ho Bao, “The Basic Problems Across the Taiwan Straits: A Case Study in Terms of Theoretical and Policy Analyses,” *Political Science Papers*, Issue 7 of 1996, pp. 305-19.

¹⁵⁹ Hu’s 517 speech was drafted by his right-handed man in TAO, Sun Yafu, Deputy Director of TAO who had long-term experience in research and study of the cross-Straits relations.

¹⁶⁰ The PLA’s assessment of Chen Shui-bian’s proposal on holding “defensive referenda” was much harsher than civilian assessments. An editorial of the PLA Daily equated the “referenda” with “separating Taiwan from China.” However, Taiwan Affairs Office was critical of referenda, but only called it “a serious provocation.” See “‘Defense Referenda’ Intended to Fundamentally Change Status Quo of the Cross-Straits Relations,” *PLA Daily*, December 12, 2003, <http://news.sohu.com/2003/12/12/47/news216814719.shtml>; Chen Binhua and Zhang Yong, “TAO: Insisting on Holding ‘Defensive Referenda’ Constituted Serious Provocations,” *Xinhua News Agency*, December 17, 2003, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2003-12/17/content_1236203.htm.

¹⁶¹ Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁶² “Hu Jintao: Enforcing Historic Mission and Creating New Development of National Defense and Military Modernization,” *Xinhua News Agency*, March 3, 2005, <http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/oldarchives/dbdh/dbdh/common/zw.jsp@label=wxzlk&id=336522&pdm=3135.htm>.

¹⁶³ “Hu Jintao’s Speech Meant Enhancement of the Standard for the PLA’s War Preparation,” *PLA Daily*, December 31/2005, <http://mil.sohu.com/20051231/n241226253.shtml>.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with a Beijing-based scholar close to the State Council, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Deng Xiaoping made a speech on Taiwan on 8 December 1978, in which Deng emphasized: first, the CCP and KMT could no longer engage in wars and otherwise, it would be harmful for the CCP itself; to solve the problem of reunification without using force, negotiation was the only way; in order to have peaceful negotiation, China’s propaganda tactics had to change and the two sides across the Strait could start trade with each other. See Deng Xiaoping’s Speeches: 1975-1980 (Taipei: Ministry of Defense General Political Warfare Department), 157-164, quoted from Kai-Huang Yang, “On Peking’s Taiwan Policy: A Historical Review,” *dongwu zhengzhi xuebao*, Issue 7, March 1997, pp. 67-103, <http://www2.scu.edu.tw/politics/journal/doc/j7/04.pdf>.

¹⁶⁶ From 1991 to 1995, 35 Taiwanese Business Associations were established. Currently, there are 125 such associations in Mainland. These associations are organized and joined by Taiwanese business people voluntarily. The purpose of such associations is to strengthen their collective bargaining power and contributing and utilizing government resources to solve business disputes or disadvantages to Taiwanese investors.

¹⁶⁷ TALSG under Deng Yingchao held meetings every Fridays at Zhongnanhai. See Lin Liyun, “Lin Liyun Reminisced the Days When All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots Was Founded,” *taisheng zazhi*, November 13/2011, <http://www.tailian.org.cn/n1080/n1125/n1060754/1061912.html>; Li Li, “Days when Deng Yingchao headed Taiwan Affairs Small Group,” *dangshi xinxiabao*, July 11, 2006, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64172/64915/4579009.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Liu Zhiqing, "Ice-breaking in 1987: how family visits were allowed across Taiwan Strait", *Jinghua Shibao*, September 27, 2009, http://epaper.jinghua.cn/html/2009-09/27/content_467032.htm.

¹⁶⁹ Ding Guangen, a bridge playmate of Deng Xiaoping, was demoted from Minister of Railways as a result of a serious railway accident. Conceivably, Ding weakened as a politician after the demotion and TAO under Ding was not strong in bureaucratic power.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with a Shanghai-based scholar with previous military background, 2013.

¹⁷¹ Yang Kaihuang, "CCP's Taiwan Policy".

¹⁷² TAO's main functions include: to study and draft guidelines and policies related to Taiwan affairs; to implement and carry out guidelines and policies related to Taiwan stipulated by the CCP Central Committee and the State Council; to organize, guide, administrate, coordinate, check and investigate the work related to Taiwan affairs of departments under the State Council and of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government; to analyze the situations in Taiwan and tendency of development of the cross-Strait relations; to coordinate the work to draft laws and regulations involving Taiwan; to make relevant preparations for negotiations and agreements with Taiwan authorities and its authorized public organizations; to administrate and coordinate direct links in mail, transport and trade across the Taiwan Straits; to take charge of the media and publicity work related to Taiwan and release news and information concerning Taiwan affairs; to handle major incidents related to Taiwan; to coordinate and guide with overall planning the economic and trade related to Taiwan and exchanges and cooperation in such areas as finance, culture, academic research, sports, science and technology, health, etc with the ministries and departments concerned. See Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, CCP Encyclopedia, October 27, 2011, http://cpcchina.chinadaily.com.cn/2011-10/27/content_13989378.htm.

¹⁷³ Interview with a professor in Taiwan studies who work with Beijing United University, Beijing, summer of 2013.

¹⁷⁴ Yang Kaihuang, "CCP's Taiwan Policy".

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Jung-Chang Chuang, "The Lobbying Behavior of the Association of Taiwan's Entrepreneur in Mainland China" (PhD diss., Chinese Culture University of Taiwan, June 2013), pp. 318-319.

¹⁷⁷ In China, powers generally concentrate in the government and the highest authority and power lie with the Central Government. If an individual wants to get things solved, he'd better reach a senior leader or worse, the ministries, if he could manage to build the connections and get attentions. That is why Chinese frequently use *Xinfang*, the system of filing complaints through letters and visits, or appealing to the Central Government, as the way to solve a dispute or correct a wrongdoing by the local government, rather than going to the local government or the court for a settlement.

¹⁷⁸ Chuang, "Lobbying Behavior," pp. 12-3.

¹⁷⁹ T. J. Cheng, "China-Taiwan Economic Linkage: Between Insulation and Superconductivity," in Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, e.d., *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 110-115.

¹⁸⁰ There is a huge difference of estimation of Taiwanese resident in Mainland. The lowest figure indicates 20,000 to 30,000 Taiwanese living in Mainland in the long term and 200,000 Taiwanese travelling across the Strait each year. See "Lin Shaobin: Advocating to Establish Medical Care Facility Accepted By Both Sides," *Wenweipo*; March 4, 2015, <http://news.wenweipo.com/2015/03/04/IN1503040069.htm>. The 2010 census figure indicated 170,000 Taiwanese were resident in Mainland, but the census only covered those who could stay in Mainland up to three months in one trip and those who were willing to accept the census study. See "Taiwanese Resident In Mainland Who Were Willing to Accept Registration Exceeded 170,000 According to the 6th Census," *China News Agency*, April 29, 2011, <http://www.chinanews.com/tw/2011/04-29/3008047.shtml>. A 2005 Xinhua article indicated that half a million Taiwanese business people and their families lived in Shanghai and its vicinity in the Yangtze River delta region. It is highly unlikely Taiwanese resident in Mainland has a drastic decline between 2005 and 2015. See "Taiwanese Business People in Mainland: From Founding and Consolidating A Business to Finding A Home," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 8, 2005, http://news.xinhuanet.com/tai_gang_ao/2005-12/08/content_3893303.htm. A spokeswoman of TAO in 2010 pointed out that Taiwanese resident in Mainland had exceeded more than a million based on "incomplete statistics". See "Record of the TAO Press Release," TAO website, February 24, 2010, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201101/t20110106_1679319.htm. On the influence of Taiwanese business people on Taiwan's elections, See "Mainland's Three Presents Benefited Taiwanese

Business People, Their Families and Taiwanese Students,” *China News Agency*, May 14, 2005, <http://www.chinanews.com/news/2005/2005-05-14/26/573973.shtml>; Chen Guiqing, “Analysis of Voting Attitudes of Taiwanese Business People In Mainland During 2012 Elections,” *Journal of Taiwan Studies*, August 2014, http://cass.its.taiwan.cn/zjlc/cgg/201408/t20140808_6893055_1.htm.

¹⁸¹ This, for instance could be located at the Mawei Port, near Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province.

¹⁸² See Te-Sheng Chen, “Analysis of Organization and Personnel of the CCP’s Taiwan Affairs,” *zhongguo dalu yanjiu*, vol. 37, issue 5, <http://nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/26744/1/c37-5a.pdf>. Based on the author’s research, Li Qingzhou was most likely an assistant to Major General Yang Side, the director of the Central Taiwan Affairs Office under Yang Shangkun.

¹⁸³ Interview with a former official who worked at Taiwan Affairs Office, Beijing, summer of 2012.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with a Beijing-based scholar specialized in Taiwan studies, 2013

¹⁸⁵ Why it occurred in 2008 is unknown to the author as the information is based from interviews. Interview with a government-affiliated scholar specialized in Taiwan studies, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁸⁶ This chapter does not include Ministry of State Security in the discussion though it has been a member of Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group. Based on interviews, MSS does not seem to show a particular policy tendency on Taiwan. Its policy consultation invites the participation of PLA representatives regularly and vice versa. However, in general the MSS adopts a pragmatic and moderate view on the Taiwan policy which is, if anything, closer to Wang Daohan’s vision than to the PLA’s. Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

¹⁸⁷ For example, in the same year of 2009, TAO conducted a study about Hu Jintao’s speech on Taiwan and emphasized the “necessity and feasibility of steering the cross-Straits relations towards peaceful development.” See “TAO Organizes the Study and Implementation of Hu Jintao’s Important Speech,” TAO website, January 4, 2009, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zt/hu/201101/t20110125_1732431.htm. A few months later, when Guo Boxiong, Vice Chairman of the CMC, visited Nanjing Military Region which would be the main force used in a possible armed conflict with Taiwan, Guo demanded that “leadership of the PLA at various levels shall consistently maintain a strong sense of crisis, mission and urgency and lead troops to extend and deepen military preparations without any relaxation.” Guo urged the PLA to “truly maintain the same level of focus on military preparations,” though he did not explicitly mention Taiwan as the target of military preparations. See “Firmly Remember the PLA’s Fundamental Function, Implement the Military’s Historic Mission and Conduct Military Preparations without Any Relaxation,” (*laoji wojun genben zhineng, lxxing jundui lishi shiming, haobu fangsong di congshi junshi douzheng zhunbei*), *PLA Daily*, November 21, 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with a former PLA naval officer, Washington DC, 2011.

¹⁸⁹ “TAO Press Release on Possibility of Hu-Ma Meeting,” *Xinhua News Agency*, November 25, 2009, http://www.gmw.cn/content/2009-11/25/content_1012990_3.htm.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, 2011.

¹⁹¹ Wang Zongming, “Taiwan’s SEF: Setting Up Representative Offices Still Under Internal Research,” *zhong ping she*, August 1, 2012, <http://hk.crntt.com/doc/1021/8/6/2/102186230.html?coluid=9&kindid=8510&docid=102186230&mdate=0807155956>; “President Ma: Establishing Representative offices Before 2016 and Hoping to Meet Xi Jinping,” *ET Today*, September 25, 2014, <http://www.ettoday.net/news/20140925/405503.htm>.

¹⁹² Jung-Chang Chuang, “Lobbying Behavior of the Association of Taiwan’s Entrepreneur in Mainland China”.

¹⁹³ Te-Sheng Chen, “Analysis of Organization and Personnel of the CCP’s Taiwan Affairs,” *zhongguo dalu yanjiu*, Vol. 37, Issue 5, <http://nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/26744/1/c37-5a.pdf>.

¹⁹⁴ See Zhang Yazhong, “Analysis of Sovereignty Sharing and Special Relationship,” *zhongguo pinglun yuekan*, Issue 146, February 2010, <http://hk.crntt.com/crn-webapp/cbsspub/secDetail.jsp?bookid=48615&secid=49206> and another version online on 24 December 2009 at http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4c604c2f0100g6ma.html.

¹⁹⁵ David M. Lampton, Notes of 1998, interview, in China, with senior scholars.

¹⁹⁶ David M. Lampton, Notes of 1998, interview, in China, with senior scholars. The author’s own interviews with multiple Shanghai-based scholars who were close to Wang Daohan conducted in March 2015 confirmed this information.

¹⁹⁷ For example, one criticism of the PLA analysts on Wang Daohan is that Wang put too much on table with Taiwan too early on, which disincentivizes Taiwan from continuing to sit at the negotiation table. Interview with multiple PLA officers who were familiar with Taiwan affairs. This thinking was reflected by General Liu Yazhou who believed that China showed its hands too early and that “by agreeing anything could be discussed under the principle of one China, (Mainland) made Taiwan lose the driving force to enter negotiations.” Liu believed “many conditions shall be given to the other side at the negotiation table to make them feel a sense of accomplishment”. See Liu Yazhou, “Grand National Policies,” July 2001, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/2884.html>.

¹⁹⁸ See Zhang Yazhong, “Analysis of Sovereignty Sharing and Special Relationship,” *zhongguo pinglun yuekan*, Issue 146, February 2010, <http://hk.crntt.com/crn-webapp/cbspub/secDetail.jsp?bookid=48615&secid=49206> and another version online: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4c604c2f0100g6ma.html.

¹⁹⁹ In Wang Daohan’s interpretation in his meeting with Koo in 1998, China for the first time acknowledged the reality that China is not yet a unified country. This acknowledgement was written in the Anti-Secession Law passed in 2005. Second, Wang’s proposal on negotiations on the equal basis of political status and therefore the reunification of the two sides would not be absorption of one by the other. Third, Taiwan’s political status shall be discussed under the prerequisite of “one China”.

²⁰⁰ Interview with multiple Shanghai-based scholars, 2011-2015.

²⁰¹ Wang Daohan’s 86-character enunciation did not include terms such as “one China, two systems” or “People’s Republic of China”. Instead, Wang called for negotiation “based on equality”, which had not been discussed by other senior PRC officials previously. Jiang advocated in 1990 “negotiations based on equality” but limited such negotiations between Kuomintang and the CCP. Neither had Jiang Zemin ever publicly affirmed Wang’s 86-character enunciation, which indicated Jiang’s reservations about the proposal on negotiations based on equality. In an article Wang wrote to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the Wang-Koo meeting, “consultations based on equality” appeared for four times, which reflected the core message of Wang’s 86-character enunciation. See Wang Daohan’s 86-character enunciation: “There is only one China in the world. Taiwan is a part of China, not yet unified. Both sides should work together, under the one China principle, to discuss reunification in consultations based on equality. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country are inseparable. Taiwan’s political status should be discussed under the one China prerequisite.” Also See “Jiang Zemin Gave An Important Speech on Taiwan on 11 June 1990”, *People’s Daily*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64165/82273/82284/5745434.html>; Wang Daohan, “Reflections from History and Future Choices: An Article Written for the Eighth Anniversary of the Wang-Koo Meeting,” *China New Agency*, April 27, 2001, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/20010428/454287.html>; He Jingping, “Wang Daohan’s 86-character Enunciation Advocated Equality,” *China Times*, April 29, 2013, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20130429000095-260210>.

²⁰² After 1998, Wang was heard complaining that Jiang no longer listened to him and when Jiang visited Shanghai, he did not come to see Wang as often as in the past. Interview with a Shanghai-based senior analyst, Shanghai, 2011 and interview with another Shanghai-based analyst, 2015. Both analysts were close to Wang Daohan and both had previous background serving in the PLA. According to the recounts of these two interviewees, Jiang started to distance himself after Wang Daohan publicized his 86-character enunciation. The divide between the two was further revealed in 1999 and 2000, while Wang complained in private occasions that Jiang “no longer listened to” him and even rarely met him when he visited Shanghai.

²⁰³ ARATS was stonewalled in 1999-2005. Wang passed away in 2005. Between 2005 and 2008, no chairman was appointed to head ARATS.

²⁰⁴ Interview with a senior PLA officer, Beijing, January 2013.

²⁰⁵ See “ARATS Charter,” *Ta Kung Pao*, December 17, 1991, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ One Shanghai-based scholar described the relationship between the PLA and Wang as “jealousy of power”. Interview with Shanghai-based scholars, Shanghai, 2011 and 2013.

²⁰⁷ According to Li Cheng, the term “Shanghai gang” (Shanghai bang) refers to current leaders whose careers have advanced primarily due to their political association with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Secretary Jiang Zemin in Shanghai. See Cheng Li, “The ‘Shanghai Gang’: Force for Stability or

Cause for Conflict?” China Leadership Monitor, no. 2 (Winter 2002); Cheng Li, “Was the Shanghai Gang Shanghaied? The Fall of Chen Liangyu and the Survival of Jiang Zemin’s Faction.” China Leadership Monitor, no. 20 (Winter 2007); and Alexis Lai, ‘One party, two coalitions’ -- China’s factional politics, *CNN*, November 8, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/23/world/asia/china-political-factions-primer/>.

²⁰⁸ The harmonious relationship with distinctive policy views between Shanghai-based scholars and the PLA could be exemplified by one example. When Mainland was interested in establishing dialogues eventually leading to cross-Strait military confidence-building measures and mil-to-mil relations, the PLA integrated the consultations with Shanghai-based scholars in the projects. However, when Shanghai-based scholars expressed interests in setting up a track-two or track-1.5 dialogues on cross-Strait military CBMs, the PLA expressed their oppositions. The initial funder of the proposal was Central Foreign Affairs Office, which chose to delay the decision on funding for this proposal until the Shanghai-based scholars basically gave up the proposal. Interview with Shanghai-based scholars, Shanghai, 2011.

²⁰⁹ The conclusion is made by the author, as a reporter for China Daily between 1994 and 2000, had interviewed and other multiple communications with both Wang Zaixi and Xin Qi. Xin Qi particularly had pragmatic views about Taiwan’s political and societal dynamics. Both understood the limitations of use of force to force the reunification. Xi Qi became an important advisor for the PLA as early as in 1985. He was allegedly the first one to propose the idea of “transitional period” of the reunification of Taiwan and mainland, which sets the ending of hostility across the Taiwan Strait and practical measures to lay a solid foundation for mutual understandings before moving on to political negotiations on reunification. Xi was also one of the PLA advisors who predicted accurately about Lee Teng-hui’s victory in the 1996 presidential election as well as the tough demonstration of force by Washington.

²¹⁰ These provinces are Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shandong, Zhejiang and Henan. See Chen Yung Hsiang, “Contributions by Taiwanese Businesses in Mainland Made to Economic Development of PRC,” National Taipei University Center for Asia Studies, 2010, <http://www.ntpu.edu.tw/college/e10/files/research/20111130103231.pdf>.

²¹¹ Cross-Strait Economic Exchange Statistics Report, December 2014, Mainland Affairs Council of Republic of China, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Data/521614493171.pdf>

²¹² [Cross-strait](#) Economic Statistics Monthly Report, Issue 202, published by Mainland Affairs Council of Republic of China, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Attachment/53415272074.pdf>.

²¹³ The figures here are all contract values of the year.

²¹⁴ See statistics reports published by Mainland Affairs Council of Republic of China, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/np.asp?ctNode=5712&mp=1>.

²¹⁵ In 1991-January 2015, about 32% of Taiwanese investment flew to Jiangsu, 19.7% to Guangdong, 15.4% to Shanghai and 7.8% to Fujian. See “Monthly Statistical Report of Cross-Strait Economic Relations”, Issue 263, Mainland Affairs Council of Republic of China (ROC), http://117.56.123.1/public/MMO/MAC/263_8.pdf.

²¹⁶ Hong Jiake and Tong Zhenyuan, “Contributions of Taiwanese Businesses to China’s Economic Development: 1988-2008”, Thesis for National Chengchi University, <http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~ctung/Documents/W-B-b-31.pdf>.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ See Bo Zhiyue, “State Power and Governance Structures,” in Chris Ogden, ed., *Handbook of China's Governance and Domestic Politics* (NY: Routledge, 2013), pp. 25-6; Bo Zhiyue, *Chinese Provincial Leaders: Economic Performance and Political Mobility since 1949* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), p. 147.

²¹⁹ Shu Keng and Rui-Hua Lin, “Institutional Origins of Weak Associations: Taiwanese Business Associations in the Yangtze and Zhu River Delta,” *Taiwan zhengzhi xuekan*, Vol. 12 Issue 2, December 2007, pp. 132-3.

²²⁰ Chen-yuan Tung, “Effect of Cross-Strait Economic and Trade Exchanges to Interactions in Cross-Strait Relations,” a conference paper for a meeting hosted by Institute of Taiwan Studies under Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, July 2001, <http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~ctung/Documents/W-B-b-3.doc>, 11; Chen-yuan Tung, *China’s Economic Leverage and Taiwan’s Security Concerns with Respect to Cross-Strait Economic Relations*, PhD dissertation, (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University, 2002), Chapter 10, pp. 368-89.

²²¹ For example, the NPC inspection team decided that the authority of reissuing Mainland travel permit for Taiwan residents in Guangdong Province shall be delegated to local public security authorities of Guangdong by Ministry of Public Security because of pervasive complaints by Taiwanese businesses in Guangdong. See Yan Junqi, Vice Chairman of NPC Standing Committee, “NPC Standing Committee Inspection Team’s Report on Inspections of Enforcement of Law on Protection of Investment of Taiwan Compatriots,” the 14th meeting of the 11th NPC Standing Committee on 26 April 2010, http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2010-04/26/content_1570893.htm.

²²² China’s Law on Legislation, Article 34 and 35.

²²³ A detailed explanation of units or offices on Taiwan embedded within ministries and ministry-level bureaus could be found in dissertation of Kuo Jui-hua. See Kuo Jui-hua, “A Study on the Taiwan Affairs Mechanism of the CCP: “Process of Government” Perspective,” PhD dissertation, National Chengchi University, 2009, pp. 200-48.

²²⁴ Julian J. Kuo, “Political Logic of Three Links Policy Change,” *dongwu zhengzhi xuebao*, issue 10 of 1999, pp. 65-95, <http://www2.scu.edu.tw/politics/journal/doc/J10/03.pdf>.

²²⁵ Kuo, “Political Logic,” pp. 65-95, <http://www2.scu.edu.tw/politics/journal/doc/J10/03.pdf>; Jya-Yuan Bao, Chih-Ching Chang and Kuang Lin, A Structural Analysis on Cross-Strait Direct Shipping, Negotiations, *Maritime Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No. 2, June 2005, pp. 41-55, http://www.mq.org.tw/upload/journal/prog/23e0816e_20130103.pdf; Oscar Chung, “Closer Than Ever,” *Taiwan Review*, December 1, 2008, <http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=46208&CtNode=1208>.

²²⁶ Interview with Shanghai-based scholars and PLA officers, 2013-2015.

²²⁷ See Liu Yazhou. “A Review of the Jinmen [Quemoy] Campaign,” <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/2882.html>.

Chapter Nine: The Rise of the South China Sea Dispute: Bureaucratic Bargaining in the Internet Age

In China, the PLA has been at the forefront of recognizing the importance of oceans for China's strategic interests, while civilians have followed its lead. Deng Xiaoping introduced the policy of "setting aside disputes and pursuing joint development" in 1979 as a model to handle the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute with Japan.¹ When China normalized relations with Southeast Asian nations during the 1970s and 1980s, Deng applied the same model of "setting aside disputes and pursuing joint development." Deng's policy was essentially one of preserving the status quo and agreeing to disagree. Once Deng articulated this policy, unless another top leader reversed it, maritime security policy would then be determined within these constraints at the level of bureaucratic bargaining. From 1979-2009, this posture greatly constrained the PLA Navy's (PLAN) scope of options and therefore its influence with regard to China's maritime security strategy.

Within this context, Admiral Liu Huaqing devised the PLAN's strategy in 1985 and set the goal of extending the PLAN's combat capability, so that, during potential battles, it could not only seize and maintain control of the seas in the South China Sea (SCS), but could also effectively control important sea lanes of communication (SLOC), thus allowing it to connect with peripheral seas.² This strategy document was more akin to a vision and a blueprint, rather than an actual operational plan, as its implementation was extremely slow under Deng and Jiang. The trajectory of the PLAN's development

has been consistent with what this strategy envisioned, while the pace of its modernization has accelerated since 2005-06. The increasing pace of the PLAN's development is due to the fact that Deng's status-quo policy has increasingly been under attack and seriously challenged by a powerful and activist Internet-based lobby of "netizens." Following the 2009 Impeccable Incident, and the stand-off for control over Scarborough Shoal (Huangyan Island) three years later, the Chinese public has paid increasing attention to the South China Sea dispute.

This case study will first analyze the PLA's role in China's maritime disputes in the 1990s, in order to illustrate the PLA's changing influence in China's maritime security policy-making, and will then explore the reasons for this change. This chapter then examines the incidents that led to the deterioration of support for Deng's status-quo policy, which culminated in the 2012 Sino-Philippine Scarborough Shoal standoff.

The reasons to conduct this case study are as follows: First, China's territorial disputes with other countries center on maritime claims, since the majority of China's land border disputes (with the notable exception of its dispute with India) have been settled. Second, as China is now the world's largest trading nation, edging out the United States in 2012 and accounting for more than one-tenth of global trade in goods in 2013, it is only a matter of time before the PLAN decides to advance into the global commons in order to protect China's trading interests.³ If China and the U.S. cannot find a sustainable formula for cooperation, this trend will only intensify its structural frictions with the U.S. Navy in the long term. Third, with regard to the gradual revision of China's maritime security policy, symbolized by the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff, bureaucratic

bargaining played an essential role, which marks a fundamental difference between this case study and the previous two case studies.

The PLAN and China's Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea in the 1990s

Compared to the Army, the PLA Navy (PLAN) is a latecomer, established on April 23, 1949 by General Zhang Aiping, with only 12 soldiers but without a single ship. The PLAN was established by taking over part of the KMT naval force, which rebelled under Admiral Lin Zun.⁴ After the Korean War started, China's security focus temporarily shifted from liberating Taiwan to Sino-U.S. confrontations on the Korean peninsula. As the mission of liberating Taiwan, which would have required substantial naval capabilities, was shelved for the time being, the PLAN's development was slowed down. The Cultural Revolution further disrupted the PLAN's development and its training of officers.

The PLAN's development picked up speed after Admiral Liu Huaqing, who studied at the Soviet Union's Voroshilov Naval Academy (today the N.G. Kuznetsov Naval Academy) from 1955-58, was appointed PLAN Commander in 1982, a position he held until 1987. As early as 1975, Liu proposed that China should develop large submarines that could be equipped with ICBMs and aircraft carriers, and that the PLAN's mission should shift to preparing for waging war in the far seas.⁵ The PLAN's submarines, Liu also proposed in 1975, "must be active in the northeast and central Pacific, as well as the Indian Ocean."⁶ As commander, Admiral Liu pushed the PLAN to become a strategic force and shift its strategy from coastal defense (*jin'an fangyu*) to offshore active defense (*jinhai jiji fangyu*). Liu also expanded the traditional concept of

“offshore” (200 nautical miles off China’s shore) to include “China’s Yellow Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea, the Spratly Islands, Taiwan, and the inside and outside seas of the Okinawa Island Chain.”⁷ Liu believed that the PLAN faced two potential battlefields: a war over Taiwan, and a conflict to resolve the Spratly Island disputes. Between these two possibilities, Liu put more emphasis on the Spratly Islands dispute, since he believed it posed a greater challenge to the PLAN’s war-fighting capabilities.⁸

With the PLAN’s accelerated transformation and modernization under Admiral Liu, China’s naval capabilities progressed significantly. The PLA’s influence in China’s maritime security policy, however, remained extremely weak throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This was partly due to the traditional division of power that made the ground forces the predominant force among all services, which led to internal divisions within the PLA when the PLAN sought a greater share of resources. Deng’s prioritization of economic modernization also led to the overall deterioration of the PLA’s well-being and the relative decline of China’s defense budget, which exacerbated the competition for resources among the services. The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis further focused the PLA’s attention on the Taiwan issue, which Jiang Zemin, who had a rocky relationship with Admiral Liu, used to advocate the development of an “assassin’s mace.” Therefore, the PLAN, lacking both capability and political support, was not in a position to weigh in on China’s maritime security policy in the South China Sea in the 1980s and 1990s, despite the fact that Admiral Liu sat on the Politburo Standing Committee from 1992-97.

Two incidents in the South China Sea in the 1990s are evidence of the PLAN’s weak influence on China’s maritime security policy during this period: the Wan’antan Incident in 1992 and the Mischief Reef Incident in 1992-94.

The 1992 Wan'antan Incident

In the Wan'antan Incident, when Vietnam challenged China's oil exploration activities in the South China Sea (SCS), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) ignored the PLAN's suggestion to send naval forces to escort and protect China's scientific ship that was conducting oil exploration from Vietnamese intimidation and chose to deescalate due to its own bureaucratic interests.

China started comprehensive scientific exploratory research in the SCS in 1984, which the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), conducted on petroleum surveying ship *Experiment 2*.⁹ The scientists concluded that the SCS could have up to 35 billion tons of petroleum reserves. This discovery interested an American company, Denver-based Crestone Energy Corporation, which negotiated with the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) South China Sea Institute to undertake joint exploration in 1991. As a result, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and Crestone signed a contract in 1992 to jointly explore the Wan'an Bei-21 block, a 25,155-square-km section of the southwestern SCS that includes the Spratly Island area.¹⁰ In April 1994, five Vietnamese boats armed with machine guns surrounded and harassed China's petroleum survey ship, the *Experiment 2*, and forced it to leave the area. The scientists on the boat reported the incident to the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology by satellite phone, which then reported the developments to its supervisor, CAS. CAS replied that under these circumstances it no longer had the authority to give further instructions.

Since China's petroleum surveying ships reported to the PLAN's South China Sea Fleet, the PLA General Staff Department (GSD), and the MFA each time prior to their departure, these three agencies were the main stakeholders during this incident, with the MFA acting as the lead agency for dealing with maritime disputes.¹¹ Therefore, command and control of *Experiment 2* belonged to the MFA.¹² Communication between *Experiment 2* and the MFA was a one-way street during this incident due to protocol, so only the MFA could initiate contact. The PLA GSD was kept informed during this dispute, but could not dictate its handling. The PLA GSD suggested sending the South China Sea Fleet to protect *Experiment 2*. The MFA disagreed and overruled the PLA GSD. The MFA initially instructed *Experiment 2* "to sit tight and wait for the support and protection of the South China Sea Fleet," but more than 23 hours later reversed course and ordered the ship to "evacuate (now)."¹³ *Experiment 2* followed the MFA's instructions, departed Wan'an, and never returned.¹⁴

The MFA disagreed with the PLA GSD and scientists on *Experiment 2* due to its bureaucratic interests. In 1992, the MFA was preparing for landmark negotiations with Vietnam aimed at resolving the two countries' territorial disputes. In October of that year, China and Vietnam would hold the first round of negotiations over disputed land territory, which the MFA had been working toward for over a decade. More importantly, the MFA was arranging then Chinese Premier Li Peng's upcoming visit to Vietnam, to be held from November 30 to December 4 of that year. The two governments were set to issue a joint communiqué, which would have been a highlight of Premier Li's groundbreaking visit. Taking a hardline approach in the Wan'an Incident would surely torpedo these diplomatic overtures. If its efforts collapsed because of an oil deal with Crestone Energy

and the *Experiment 2*'s confrontation in Wan'antan with Vietnam, the MFA would pay the price by making Premier Li lose face and risk losing its own decade-long hard work.¹⁵

Although CNOOC's deal with Crestone Energy remains valid in a purely contractual sense, following this incident it has yet to be implemented. The MFA clearly drew a red line: not one oil well could be drilled, and all Chinese assets had to leave the territory in the sea that was hotly contested with and disputed by Vietnam.¹⁶ The Continental Oil and Transportation Company (CONOCO), which merged with Crestone Energy, signed a deal with Vietnam in 1996 on joint petroleum exploration, which covered the area that CNOOC and Crestone were contracted to explore.¹⁷ The Wan'antan Incident damaged the PLA and MFA's relationship and ability to cooperate on maritime security policy in the SCS, with SOA, then still a small and powerless agency, standing firmly with the PLA.

The Mischief/Meiji Reef Incident in 1992-94

As early as 1988, soon after China built a marine observation station on Fiery Cross/Yongshu Reef, Lu Shouben, then chief of SOA's Management and Command Division (1980-88), the predecessor of China Maritime Surveillance (CMS), proposed to establish two "marine observation stations" on Scarborough Shoal, one on its southwest coral reefs and the other on its northeast coral reefs. Neither the MFA nor the PLA GSD approved of this proposal. The PLA GSD and PLAN had just had a bitter fight over the justification of the 314 Sino-Vietnamese Naval Clash in 1988, which possibly led to the PLA GSD's reluctance to support any initiative in the SCS.¹⁸

In 1990, Lu, then Chief of SOA's Management and Surveillance Division (1989-94), applied the lesson he learned from his failure in 1988 as he proposed to occupy Mischief Reef. He consulted with the PLA GSD first and got its quiet approval. Then, he convinced the Ministry of Agriculture, which oversaw China's fishery industry, to send in a joint proposal on establishing both a marine observation station and a fishery transition hub/supply and storage center for fishermen. With multiple players supporting this proposal, the MFA eventually decided to give it the green light.¹⁹ The MFA made the decision favorable to SOA probably because it realized if it were to oppose the proposal it would have to fight an uphill battle against multiple bureaucracies, and it was unlikely to win such a battle. As a result, over the following years China built a harbor and a storage warehouse on Mischief Reef, which the Philippines did not discover until 1994.²⁰ Once the Philippines found out about China's construction on Mischief Reef, it lodged a strong protest against China, but it was already too late to push China out. The Philippines' protest, however, still had an impact on the MFA. The MFA issued a bureaucratic "opinion," instructing the fishermen and the SOA ships to stop visiting Mischief Reef. These facilities were then abandoned for a decade, until 2004, when Chinese fisherman Hu Donghai proposed to take over the facilities, which was approved. Hu, motivated by commercial interests, invested RMB 20 million to convert the facilities on Mischief Reef into a fishery.²¹ A typhoon later completely destroyed Hu's fishery. Nonetheless, this process bought China time to build a consensus on protecting its maritime interests, which it operationalized in 2012 by occupying Mischief Reef.²² In 2015, China expanded Mischief Reef through land reclamation, filling in with sand and

coral cuttings an area of approximately 2.42 square kilometers that previously had virtually no above-water terrain.²³

The two incidents in the 1990s indicate that as China's maritime security policy was decided and implemented at the bureaucratic level, the MFA, the leading agency in dealing with maritime disputes, effectively boxed out the PLA and did not allow its more assertive policy proposals to be adopted. These incidents also indicate that an alliance of powerful bureaucracies could exert more influence in obtaining its desired policy outcome than any single bureaucracy could achieve by acting alone.

Why the Consensus Behind Deng's Policy Broke Down

For almost three decades following Deng Xiaoping's first articulation of it in 1979, the policy of shelving territorial disputes in exchange for peace at sea, joint development of natural resources, and good relationships with maritime neighbors was lauded domestically in China as a new model to deal with maritime disputes. Deng presented this policy during a time in which a poor and weak China was embarking on a new path of groundbreaking reform and opening-up. Given Deng's authority as paramount leader, his policy was accepted without question and went unchallenged. Deng, however, never prescribed how long China should shelve its maritime disputes. Three decades after Deng enunciated this policy, the consensus behind it began to deteriorate. Why did Deng's policy work in the 1970s and 1980s, and even the 1990s, but not in 2009? Factors ranging from a shift in the global distribution of power, to China's deteriorating external environment and its changing domestic political landscape, all contributed to the policy's breakdown.

China emerged from the 2008-09 global financial crisis (GFC) in relatively good shape, with greater relative comprehensive national power than it had prior to the crisis. As a result, Deng's status-quo policy faced severe challenges from inside and outside of China, as analysts believed that China should use its increased power to pursue its national interests in the maritime domain. According to Barry Naughton, a leading analyst of China's economy, the GFC "marked a fundamental turning point in China's global economic position."²⁴ The GFC hit the U.S. and European economies hard but left China's economy largely unscathed thanks to its quick, massive, and effective stimulus plan. China became the world's second-largest economy in 2010, and would surpass the U.S. to become the world's largest economy, measured in real purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, by the end of 2014. Even though China's per capita GDP is still less than a quarter of the U.S. level, China's seeming economic success and its social pluralization enhanced Chinese citizens' "political awakening" on issues ranging from problems of governance and the government's legitimacy to the soundness of its policies.²⁵ One-third of China's traded goods, worth US\$1.3-1.4 trillion annually, are transported through the South China Sea, making sea lanes of transportation in this area an important Chinese national interest. This has greatly reinforced the ongoing shift in the Chinese government's orientation, which started in 2003 when Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao took power, from focusing on economic growth above all else to concentrating on social issues, the government's legitimacy, and public opinion.

China's strengthened global economic position after the GFC sent a wake-up call to China's maritime neighbors with which it had unresolved territorial and maritime disputes. China's continued economic growth, paired with the U.S.'s economic downturn

during the GFC, has deeply worried Asian countries. Although most Asian countries have benefited economically from China's rise, they fear that, with China's economy on a path to overtake the U.S. economy, and its commitment to devoting more resources to its naval modernization, time is on China's side in terms of the SCS disputes. Out of fear and deep anxiety over their security, these countries responded by what is known in the international relations literature as hedging: simultaneously urging the U.S. to reinforce and strengthen its engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, while also expanding and deepening their economic ties with China. The former response actively pressured the U.S. to look east, while the latter made the U.S. anxious about the future direction of an Asia that is dominated by China and might even exclude the U.S.²⁶

China and the other SCS claimants differ over who is causing tension in the region. From the perspective of the U.S. and China's neighbors such as Vietnam and the Philippines, China's increasing assertiveness has forced them to respond.²⁷ From the Chinese perspective, the U.S. rebalance or pivot to Asia is a veiled attempt to contain China, and has stirred up tensions by encouraging claimants to resist China.²⁸ Thus, some Asian countries might manipulate the situation in order to gain support from the U.S. and a strategic advantage over China. China believes that the U.S. is leveraging these maritime disputes in its pursuit to contain China, while its neighbors are manipulating the delicate Sino-U.S. competition for power and influence for their own benefit.²⁹ Therefore, the dynamic regarding the SCS disputes after the GFC differs from that of the 1970s and 1980s, as good will has been replaced by insecurity, mutual mistrust, and a lack of compromise on both sides. Some in China have argued that since its external

environment has changed, China needs to respond by likewise adjusting and repositioning its strategy toward the maritime disputes.³⁰

The change in China's external security environment contributed to the decline in consensus around Deng's policy prescription for handling China's maritime disputes. Changes in China's domestic political environment also played an essential role in changing its maritime policy position.

First, Chinese leaders' weakening authority has decreased the public's confidence in and increased its doubts about the government's policies. During Mao's era, when Chinese leaders were worshiped almost like gods and dissent on policies could lead to ones' political purge, nobody dared to openly doubt or challenge the wisdom of their policies. Deng, during his tenure as China's supreme leader, did not possess the same absolute authority as Mao. Yet the major strategic shift in the trajectory of China's national development and its foreign and security policy that Deng initiated went largely unchallenged. During Jiang Zemin's era, Deng's legacy still dominated and guided Chinese foreign policy, even after Deng passed away in 1997. The MFA faithfully implemented Deng's thinking on maritime disputes, often using Deng's lingering authority to silence opponents to this approach. As Hu Jintao was even weaker than his predecessors, the Chinese public began to seriously doubt the wisdom of maintaining Deng's status-quo policy on the SCS.

In addition to the weakening of China's top leader, the concurrent spread of the Internet has magnified each crisis, making each one much more urgent and pertinent.³¹ During Mao, Zhou Enlai and even Deng's era, information available to the leaders was much greater than the information available to the public. In comparison, nowadays the

public sees the same information as the leaders in many cases, and the leaders feel pressure to respond immediately. As such, mistakes and errors are inevitable, since decisions need to be made with such rapidity. This in turn exacerbated the Chinese public's suspicion that their leaders may not be right and are not infallible.

Second, the decentralization of power in the policy formation and implementation process and the pluralization of policy actors has increasingly weakened the MFA's authority.³² The MFA sat in the drivers seat and held firm control of the steering wheel in handling China's maritime security policy involving its territorial disputes and negotiations throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This contributed to the MFA's success in resolving almost every territorial dispute on land. Since 2009, however, the MFA's control over China's maritime security policy has faced tremendous challenges from a variety of policy actors. These policy actors, with their own resources and specialized knowledge in a particular functional area, are strongly motivated to expand their bureaucratic powers and realize their own policy visions in areas the MFA used to dominate. These actors formed a natural political/policy alliance with the PLA. Unlike the PLA, these new actors are not constricted by taboos such as "the Party commands the gun," and are therefore more aggressive in pushing the envelope during bureaucratic turf wars with the MFA.

Third, since 2003, when they obtained the government's permission to post a series of online petitions against Japan, Chinese netizens have become an active force in China's foreign and security policy and increasingly constrain the government's room to compromise over maritime disputes.³³ The Internet's diffusion has greatly empowered netizens, which represent a small cross-section of Chinese society, consisting of mainly

young, inexperienced, poor, and less educated Chinese. These netizens can, when strongly motivated, act collectively and swiftly to place pressure on the government.³⁴ The very nature of their targeted, “actionable” voice has made netizens a formidable social force that the Chinese government cannot ignore. On maritime security issues, netizens clearly advocated China adopting a more assertive policy against its neighboring countries. Their voice is inflammatory, inviting the Chinese public to question, “we were bullied when we were weak and poor, but why are we still being bullied when we are rich and strong?” As Chinese politics continued to fragment and Chinese society became increasingly empowered, Deng’s vision for how to handle maritime disputes was bound to be challenged at some point. Netizens precipitated this process and strengthened the challengers’ power.

The change in China’s global economic position, deterioration of China’s external security environment, and China’s domestic politics combined to precipitate the fracture in the consensus behind Deng’s policy of shelving disputes and pursuing joint development.

The State Oceanic Administration’s (SOA) Ascendancy

When explaining the PLA’s influence with regard to maritime disputes in the SCS, one must take into account the State Oceanic Administration’s (SOA) ascendancy to the center of the policy-making process and its complicated relationship with the PLA. As Deng’s status-quo policy encountered tremendous difficulties, the PLA forged an important alliance with SOA, an organization that was even more motivated than the

PLA to break the MFA's monopoly over maritime security policy and push China to prioritize protecting its maritime interests over pursuing regional stability.

SOA was established in 1964 and, despite the fact that it was listed directly under the State Council, the PLAN hosted and supervised it as soon as it was founded. In 1993, SOA started to report to the State Science and Technology Commission instead of the PLAN. After 1998, SOA changed its “mother-in-law” (ministry in charge) again to the Ministry of Land and Resources. In 1983, China Maritime Surveillance (CMS), with a staff of around 2,900, was established under SOA, which had evolved from SOA's office of Management and Command (*guanli zhihui shi*).³⁵

SOA and its armed branch, CMS, are strongly motivated to counter the MFA's influence over China's maritime security policy process because of their bureaucratic “personality.” SOA traditionally relied on its professional and scientific expertise to supervise and manage China's maritime territory, enforce coastal environmental protection regulations, and organize scientific and technical research of China's territorial waters. Three groups of people largely constitute SOA: scientists, international law experts, and military veterans. The first two groups have firm convictions about historic and legal facts that support China's claims to sovereignty over disputed areas of the SCS. SOA's military veterans, mindful of the importance of protecting China's security and sovereignty, are highly motivated and passionate to protect China's maritime territory and rights. This bureaucratic “personality” leads SOA to have unusually strong convictions and motivations, and demand to provide its professional expertise and opinion during any negotiation regarding maritime territory and rights, a demand that the MFA has not always respected. Two generations of SOA officials and CMS officers

consistently shared the strong conviction that China's maritime sovereignty and interests, rather than its interest in regional stability, needs to be China's first priority when formulating its maritime policy. This thinking is distinctly different than the MFA's.

Despite its overriding concern for protecting China's maritime interests and territory, SOA was traditionally a weak political bureaucracy in areas where China's maritime policy overlapped with its broader foreign policy. SOA officials indicated that they deeply resented the fact that in their view the MFA did not sufficiently consult with it in the past, especially during negotiations with Vietnam on land border disputes, the signing of the Sino-Republic of Korea fishery agreement in 2000, and the 2002 signing of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).³⁶

SOA played an active role in pushing Chinese leaders to pay attention to the development of China's maritime economy and the goal of "devising a national maritime development strategy."³⁷ SOA was instrumental in drafting the State Council's National Maritime Economy Development Plan of 2003 and the National Maritime Science and Technology Development Plan for the 11th Five-Year Plan, which was implemented beginning in 2006. These efforts achieved significant results. In 2006, Hu Jintao publicly categorized China as "a major maritime power" (*haiyang daguo*), which formed a contrast with Jiang Zemin and previous leaders' emphasis on "China as both a major land power and a major power on the shore" (*binhai daguo*).³⁸

As China's maritime economy becomes a strong engine for its overall economic development, SOA has also become a powerful bureaucracy. As China became the world's second-largest economy in 2010, and the world's largest trading nation in 2012, maritime interests have become essential to China's continued economic growth.³⁹ China

estimated the production value of its marine economy in 1978 at approximately US\$878 million, while thirty years later, in 2008, this estimate rose to US\$439 billion, an increase from less than one percent to 9.8 percent of China's GDP.⁴⁰ The increased strategic importance of maritime affairs to China and the ever-expanding spectrum of maritime issues have helped SOA, a weak and unnoticed bureaucracy in the 1980s and 1990s, gain bureaucratic power.

SOA became one of the primary policy actors in China's maritime security policy-making process after Liu Cigui, who was closely associated with Xi Jinping, the heir-apparent who was tapped to become China's supreme leader in 2012, became its Director in 2011. SOA's increased stature allowed it to challenge and break the MFA's monopoly in this policy area. Xi served as an official in Fujian Province from 1985 to 2002. Liu, two years younger than Xi and also a part of the generation of youths who were sent down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, probably crossed paths with Xi around 1985-88, when Xi was the Deputy Mayor of Xiamen, Fujian Province and Liu was in a junior position in the same province in Shaowu. Xi and Liu are said to have maintained a close personal relationship throughout the years.⁴¹ In 2011, Liu was plucked from Xiamen and promoted to Director and Party Secretary (therefore the top leader) of SOA. Xi is said to endorse Liu's approach of taking a firmer position in maritime disputes and prioritizing the protection of China's maritime rights/interests (*haishang weiquan*) over the maintenance of regional stability (*haishang weiwen*).⁴²

SOA intervened in China's maritime security policy-making process through its subsidiary, CMS, a paramilitary law-enforcement force with missions that include environmental protection, scientific research, and enforcement of exclusive economic

zone (EEZ) rights and interests. Both SOA and CMS had a strong bureaucratic incentive to perform, as the push to streamline institutions and the competition for power and finite resources brought intense pressure on these organizations. In particular, SOA was motivated to perform as it sought greater bureaucratic power and elevated bureaucratic status to that of a full ministry (it had traditionally been a vice minister level agency, receiving supervision from a “mother-in-law” ministry), and CMS needed to impress its peers and bosses as it looked for a way to justify its existence. China’s maritime law-enforcement milieu was at this point fiercely competitive, with five forces existing under strong bureaucracies, with overlapping policy mandates, strong enforcement capabilities, and lucrative economic interests, and all vying for an enlarged role. Lyle Goldstein accurately described this bureaucratic competition as “five dragons playing in the water.”⁴³ If CMS did not prevail against the four other competing agencies in this race, it faced the real possibility of being absorbed by another agency. If SOA and CMS excelled in this competition, it would not only secure CMS’s survival as a bureaucracy, but also greatly strengthen SOA’s bureaucratic power and resources. More importantly, law-enforcement power in China means an agency has greater access to discretionary resources, as it has partial control over a certain percentage of the fines it collects. For example, one sting operation, Maritime Shield 2013, which lasted five weeks, collected RMB 670 million.⁴⁴ Although a major portion of the fines law-enforcement agencies collect has to go into the state coffer, the agency collecting these fines is normally allowed to keep a portion of this revenue, which is enormously appealing to bureaucracies.

From “Impeccable Incident” to “Scarborough Shoal Standoff”

The PLAN has a natural blood bond with SOA, as SOA’s personnel includes many veterans, and due to its bureaucratic history, as SOA reported to the PLAN after its birth. CMS has an even higher percentage of veterans among its staff because of the necessary expertise it needs to perform its duties. CMS inherited all of its ships and facilities from the PLAN. CMS and the PLAN naturally share an understanding that the importance of protecting China’s sovereignty and its maritime interests exceeds the importance of maintaining regional stability, or that the goal of *weiquan* (protecting maritime rights/interests) supersedes that of *weiwen* (protecting stable relations with other countries). Since the 1992 Wan’antan Incident, the PLA and CMS under SOA have been allies and sympathetic to each other’s policy positions. They communicate with each other much more frequently than each of them does with the MFA.⁴⁵

Although the PLAN shares SOA’s strong convictions, due to various factors it is heavily constrained in pushing through its agenda. First, the PLAN is only one service of the PLA, and therefore it has to go through procedures to build a consensus with other bureaucracies within the PLA in order to translate its proposition into official PLA policy. Second, any provocative action the PLAN takes may result in a much more explosive impact, thereby inviting international criticism. Third, as a military that has made substantial progress toward professionalization, the PLA is hesitant to take actions that directly contradict or confront the MFA. The PLA, however, has no reservations about offering its support to a policy ally, either through its own channels that reach the top leader or through bureaucratic bargaining. The PLA’s support is also important since it is the only actor that provides hard-power protection during times of armed conflict.

CMS's Lessons From The Impeccable Incident

From 2009-12, a series of maritime incidents between China and other countries, including the United States, took place, highlighting the gradual adjustment of China's maritime security posture toward a more aggressive approach. One incident – the 2009 Impeccable Incident involving the U.S. Navy – in particular influenced the pattern of CMS's maritime behavior.

On March 8, 2009, a U.S. Navy ocean surveillances ship, the USNS Impeccable (T-AGOS 23), was operating approximately seventy-five miles south of Hainan Island in the SCS, within China's EEZ but under UNCLOS is considered the high seas. Five Chinese vessels then surrounded and harassed the Impeccable. The fishing trawlers reportedly maneuvered within twenty-five feet of the Impeccable and then intentionally stopped in front of it, forcing it to take emergency actions in order to avoid a collision.⁴⁶ The following day, the official U.S. statement identified the five Chinese vessels involved in the incident: "The Chinese ships involved in the March 8 incident included a Chinese Navy intelligence collection ship (AGI), a Bureau of Maritime Fisheries Patrol Vessel, a SOA/CMS patrol vessel, and two small Chinese-flagged trawlers."⁴⁷

This incident came after China's repeated protests to the U.S. regarding the U.S. Navy's close-in surveillance of China, because China disagreed with the U.S. on whether it is acceptable for foreign naval ships to operate in another country's EEZ without pre-approval by the country. This difference between the U.S. and Chinese military, which culminated in the 2001 EP-3 Incident, had continued to be a contentious issue between the two sides. Wu Zhuang, the Director of the South China Sea Branch of the Fishery

Administration, under the Ministry of Agriculture, initiated the actions against the Impeccable. Wu only informed the lowest level of the PLAN, the fleet in that area (*haiqu jiandui*), before the ships' departure, which explains the presence of the PLA intelligence collection ship, based on the U.S. account.⁴⁸

Despite the diplomatic tension this incident caused to U.S.-China relations, Chinese netizens roundly applauded China's actions during the Impeccable Incident. China's hosting of the 2008 Olympic games and the strengthening of its global economic position after the GFC stoked nationalism among the Chinese public. The Chinese government assessed this incident positively, even though Chinese leaders consciously avoided such provocations in the past for fear of escalating such incidents. Based on this post-incident assessment, the outcome favored SOA/CMS and the Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC): if China could be seen to stand up for and uphold its principles, even when high-level officials did not plan to precipitate such incidents, as long as they did not cause a spiral of escalation it was then a big win for the Chinese government.⁴⁹

Chinese netizens' overwhelming support and the positive post-incident assessment inspired the FLEC and CMS to continue their provocative actions. In May 2011, three CMS ships cut the survey cables of a Vietnam Oil & Gas Group (also known as PetroVietnam) ship in lot 148 in the SCS, which both Vietnam and China claim.⁵⁰ These three CMS ships belonged to its South China Sea Branch, and Wu Ping, the Deputy Chief of CMS, initiated this operation.⁵¹ Less than a month later, three FLEC ships did the same thing. The public always applauded these random, spontaneous and in some cases reckless actions taken by lower-level government and military entities and

individuals, which left their supervisory authority and the MFA no choice but to support them. The PLA consistently played a supporting role by providing vocal backing to such initiatives during inter-agency consultations, and also giving intelligence that helped facilitate these actions.⁵²

China's provocative actions, beginning with the Impeccable Incident, repeatedly targeted countries that had maritime disputes with China. The Chinese public, and netizens in particular, overwhelmingly approved of this reckless approach, as it was seen to have better protected China's maritime interests, and became the precursor to the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff.

The Scarborough Shoal Incident

The standoff over Scarborough Shoal (Huangyan Island), a traditional fishing ground used by both Chinese and Filipino fisherman, started on April 10, 2012, though it had been brewing for at least two months before the actual stand-off took place.⁵³ The Philippine House of Representatives approved the Philippine Baseline Law (House Bill 4153) in February 2012, which delineated which sea lanes in archipelagic waters the Philippines claimed and included Scarborough Shoal. According to this law, foreign ships/aircraft passing the Philippines' archipelagic sea lanes are prohibited from fishing in these areas, and foreign military aircraft and warships are barred from using any type of weapons/ammunition for any war game exercises.⁵⁴ In February, the Philippines' Secretary of Energy also announced plans to develop 15 hydrocarbon blocks in the Reed Bank area, which forms part of the Philippines' continental shelf off Palawan Island but

is also within China's nine-dashed line (NDL), which resulted in a war of words between the two countries.⁵⁵

The process that led to the Philippines' seizure of a Chinese fishing vessel began when a Philippine Air Force (PAF) reconnaissance plane spotted eight Chinese fishing boats engaged in "illegal fishing in Philippine waters" around the shoal on April 8. The Philippines deployed its recently-purchased U.S. patrol cutter, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, on April 10, and the Philippine Navy attempted to arrest these Chinese fishermen and confiscate their fishing vessels.⁵⁶ Previously, during similar incidents, China did nothing in response but send oral protests through its embassy in Manila. For instance, in 1998, the Philippines intercepted four Chinese fishing vessels around the shoal, arrested 51 fishermen, and put them in prison for nearly half a year. In May 1999, a Philippine warship sank one Chinese fishing vessel. According to a Philippine source, China's ambassador in the past even made an "apologetic" explanation to the Philippine government that "the number of Chinese fishermen in the area has increased tremendously and that the government had difficulty controlling them."⁵⁷ According to this unconfirmed source, after previous arrests of Chinese fishing vessels, "the Chinese MFA even disclosed to the Philippine government that it had started looking for alternative sources of livelihood for the arrested fisherman so that they would stop fishing at the Scarborough Shoal."⁵⁸ This time, however, CMS and FLEC broke with China's pattern of behavior and chose to intervene, which led to the standoff.

When the Chinese fishermen saw the Philippine airplane, they knew that a Philippine warship would be coming soon. They reported to the FLEC's local subsidiary in Hainan Island, which is under the Ministry of Agriculture. FLEC then notified CMS's

local branch in Hainan, since at that time two CMS ships happened to be patrolling close to the shoal. CMS Hainan decided to send its ships to protect the fishermen, reasoning, “it doesn’t matter if it is a FLEC ship or a CMS ship. They are all Chinese ships.”⁵⁹ Each of these decisions was made at the local level of FLEC and CMS. The Philippine government was caught by surprise when these two CMS ships arrived and placed themselves between the Philippine warship and the Chinese fishing vessels at Scarborough Shoal. The two CMS ships effectively prevented the Chinese fishermen’s arrest and then ordered the Philippine warship to move out of China’s territorial waters.

CMS’s South China Sea Branch reported back to CMS headquarters in Hainan, which then reported to the MFA and the PLA GSD. As the crisis had a real possibility of escalating into a war with the Philippines, the MFA reported it immediately to the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG). The MFA opposed China’s changing pattern of behavior during such incidents and proposed not to escalate or continue this confrontation with the Philippines. The PLA GSD disagreed and provided a military contingency plan. The FALSG, led by Hu Jintao, was hesitant to make a decision and did not do so for one day. CMS waited with great anxiety and thought it would be penalized for rocking the boat without getting the MFA’s pre-approval. Then, finally, Xi Jinping allegedly spoke up, probably during the FALSG meeting. Xi was still just Hu’s anointed successor, but beginning in 2008-09 he had already started to oversee China’s maritime policies. Xi believed that even if the economy may be negatively impacted in the short term due to blowback, CMS and even the military had to take the steps necessary to protect China’s maritime interests.⁶⁰

As Manila decided to deescalate the crisis and replaced its warship with a smaller coast guard vessel, Beijing sent the Yuzheng-310, FLEC's most advanced patrol ship, to join the two CMS ships already stationed at the shoal. According to their respective bureaucratic responsibilities, FLEC, rather than CMS, was tasked with protecting Chinese fishermen. The stand-off lasted until mid-June. The PLAN's South China Sea Fleet and the Guangzhou Military Region were fully prepared to go into action once the Philippine side fired the first shot. The PLA has prided itself on a long tradition of not firing the first shot, and thus many officers were hoping the Philippine side would make a mistake and fire the first shot.⁶¹ The Philippines, however, did not take the bait.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., Kurt Campbell, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, was secretly serving as mediator between China and the Philippines.⁶² Campbell was initially under pressure to reach a deal, as such a deal could be used as a deliverable during Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III's upcoming visit to Washington, scheduled for June 6, 2012.⁶³ It was not in the U.S. interest to see China and the Philippines slide into an armed conflict, as the U.S. might be forced to intervene on behalf of the Philippines due to its 1951 mutual defense treaty with the Philippines (although the U.S. has not definitively stated whether it considers offshore islands in the SCS to be covered by this treaty). In reality, the negotiations dragged on much longer. The upcoming typhoon season had facilitated the secret negotiations and increased the incentives on both sides to pull back before a typhoon hit the area.

On June 16, President Aquino pulled back all Philippine vessels. While Beijing seemed to follow suit two days later, China's MFA spokesman Hong Lei on June 18 denied that China had ever made a promise to remove its assets from the area.⁶⁴ It seems

that China did indeed withdraw all but one of its civilian patrol boats.⁶⁵ Then, Chinese patrol boats from at least two government agencies continually returned to Scarborough Shoal, and eventually so did some Chinese fishing vessels.⁶⁶ A Philippine government official told *The Associated Press* that six Chinese government ships and 30 Chinese fishing boats were sighted at Scarborough Shoal on June 19.⁶⁷ On June 26, the Philippine Navy detected from the air that China had six fishing vessels and 17 boats in the lagoon, and three CMS ships and several fishing vessels outside the lagoon. By September 2012, China held actual control of the shoal, and was preventing Philippine fishing boats from entering.

China's South China Sea Dilemma and the Scarborough Shoal Model

The intensification of crises and competition in the SCS, despite the 2002 DOC, produced the “South China Sea Dilemma” (*nanhai kunju*) in China’s eyes. Deng’s policy of shelving disputes and pursuing joint development has not prevented China’s neighboring countries, in China’s opinion, from seizing actual control of disputed waters and features and exploring resources unilaterally. China believes that its public commitment to pursuing a path of peaceful development further incentivized smaller and weaker countries to take a series of aggressive actions, as they do not believe China will retaliate by using force. Therefore, China was faced with a dilemma in the SCS: China wants to maintain the status quo while others do not; and China’s emphasis on peaceful development, which ties its hands and limits the range of actions it can take, only incentivizes other countries to unilaterally seize features and exploit their resources. China could keep this dilemma under wraps when it was weak, and therefore had an

easier case to make to its domestic audience that there was nothing it could do. As China becomes richer and more powerful, however, such a policy is unsustainable.

The Scarborough Shoal Incident symbolizes a revision of the dominant thinking in China's maritime security policy. Under the Scarborough Island Model, based on China's handling of the 2012 standoff, multiple approaches, with the diplomatic option serving as just one tool in China's toolbox, are applied to achieve actual control over disputed islands and waters.⁶⁸ Through the Scarborough Shoal Incident, China set the precedent that if it believes any country is attempting to alter the status quo, it will respond by escalating the situation and exacting a punishment against the offending country. By increasing the penalty to the side that makes the first move to change the status quo, China increases the cost of other countries' aggression. By doing this, China not only pushes its opponent back to the original "line of control," but also has the opportunity to seize the territory under its opponent's control. By doing this, China hopes to deter any country from trying to change the status quo. Therefore, the Scarborough Island Model aims at breaking China's South China Sea dilemma and "stopping China's bleeding."⁶⁹ Even the *People's Daily* openly hailed the Scarborough Island Model for "forcing opponents to withdraw without fighting a war."⁷⁰

When examining the Scarborough Shoal Incident, a difficult question needs to be answered, namely: What happened when China evidently accepted mediation from the U.S., but seemed to violate its promises by not withdrawing all of its ships?

Bonnie Glaser, an American analyst at CSIS, offered two possibilities of how this happened: either China's MFA negotiated in bad faith when it agreed to pull back China's ships in tandem with the Philippine pullback; or the MFA made the deal in good

faith but could not convince other actors such as the PLA to stick to the deal.⁷¹ The latter hypothesis, if true, has great bearing on this chapter's hypothesis that the ground is shifting in favor of SOA and the PLA (the "*weiquan*" camp) and away from MFA (the "*weiwen*" camp). A diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, who was present during the negotiations, offered a third possibility: China did not violate its promise. According to this diplomat, China lived up to its promise to evacuate all Chinese ships from Scarborough Shoal in tandem with the Philippine pullback, but never verbally promised not to send its ships back to the area.⁷²

Conclusion

From the Impeccable Incident to the Scarborough Shoal Incident, bold actions undertaken by paramilitary forces such as CMS and FLEC did not end badly in China's postmortem analyses. Neither of these incidents ended in war, but the risk of war was very high. China's Scarborough Shoal Model, which has been partially accepted though not finalized, prescribes an escalatory response to penalize countries that intend to change the status quo, which, arguably, is in line with Deng's thinking on the need to preserve the status quo, but in spirit contravenes his policy prescription.

Since 1979, the PLA has never been the lead agency that handles China's maritime security contingencies in the SCS. In the 1980s and 1990s, it had major disagreements with the MFA on how to handle maritime contingencies and China's general maritime strategy in the SCS. As Deng's maritime security policy dominated China's foreign policy, and the MFA dominated the implementation of this policy, the PLA had little influence over the actual policy outcome.

The PLA's level of involvement in China's maritime security strategy began to change when other, more motivated policy actors, such as SOA and CMS, broke the MFA's monopoly as the policy process's leading agency. In the policy process, as evidenced during the Mischief Reef Incident, an alliance of multiple policy actors (SOA and the Ministry of Agriculture, with the PLA's pre-approval and backing) on the policy proposal could more easily obtain the MFA's support and face less resistance from the agency. SOA and CMS also created political space and the precedent for unilateral action, supported by the following conditions: favorable public opinion that brings pressure to bear on the top leader; a sympathetic new leader who wants to demonstrate change and personally identifies with both the PLA and the need to protect China's maritime territory and rights; and the PLA's loyal backing and its effective protection. As CMS and SOA actively pursued a policy agenda that suited their bureaucratic interests, but received the PLA's favor and support, the MFA's control over policies was undermined. Therefore, although the PLA more willingly receded to the "second line" (*er'xian*) to act as the last resort in the SCS after 2009, the paramilitary forces carry out the PLA's preferred policy agenda. As the "*weiquan*" camp gains momentum and support from the leaders and the public in handling China's maritime security policy, the MFA has been increasingly sidelined. Therefore, in analyzing the evolution of China's maritime security policy from 2009-12, the clear winners are SOA and CMS, followed by the PLA, whose influence is relatively unchanged but has increased relative to the MFA.⁷³

¹ The island group, which is located in the East China Sea, 150km north of the Yaeyama Islands of Japan and 170km north-east of Taiwan, is claimed by China, Taiwan and Japan. The U.S. and Japan refer it as the Senkaku Islands and China refers it as the Diaoyu Islands while Taiwan refers it as the Diaoyutai Islands. Another reef and rock group in dispute, the sovereignty of which is contested by Taiwan, the Philippines

and China, is referred by the U.S. and the Philippines as the Scarborough Shoal, by China as the Huangyan Island, and by Taiwan as the Democracy Reef. For this dissertation, I will put the commonly known name in the U.S. first and then the Chinese name second to refer to the disputed islands or reefs when referring to them for the first time, such as Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Scarborough/Huangyan Island, Mischief/Meiji Reef, and then use only the commonly known name in the U.S. for the rest of this chapter. Deng first raised this idea when he tried to normalize the relationship with Japan. In June 1979, China formally proposed the concept of joint development of resources adjacent to the Diaoyu Island to the Japanese side. See “Set Aside Dispute and Pursue Joint Development”, website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 17, 2000, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/3602/3604/t18023.htm>.

² Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 434-8.

³ China's total volume of exports and imports in 2013 amounted to 25,826.7 billion yuan (US\$ 4.16 trillion), which makes China accounts for one tenth of the world's total exports and imports. In 2000, China only accounted for 3 percent of the world's total exports and imports. See "Bulletin on Statistics about China's National Economic and Social Development", State Statistics Bureau of China, published on 24 February 2014; Jamil Anderlini and Lucy Hornby, "China overtakes US as world's largest goods trader", *Financial Times*, January 10, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7c2dbd70-79a6-11e3-b381-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3eelAk2KS>. China's volume of exports and imports of goods in 2012 totaled US\$ 3,866.76 billion, which exceeded that of the U.S. China already became the largest nation of exports and the second largest nation of imports in 2009. See "China's Imports and Exports Totaled US\$ 3,866.76 billion in 2012, with a 6.2% Growth Rate," *Xinhua News Agency*, January 10, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2013-01/10/c_124212689.htm.

⁴ Chronology of the PLA Navy's Organizational Building (*haijun zuzhi jianshe dashiji*), 12.

⁵ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, pp. 354-7.

⁶ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 354.

⁷ Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing's Memoir*, p. 434.

⁸ “Liu Huaqing Advancing Strategic Revolution of the PLA Navy, Focusing On the Spratlys Dispute”, *Xiandai junshi zazhi* (Modern Military Magazine), April 2010.

⁹ This group of scientists includes Jiang Shaoren, Zhao Huanting, Chen Qingchao, Hao Yan and Zheng Jinxing.

¹⁰ Tong Hum Kang, Vietnam and the Spratly Islands Dispute since 1992 (Master's thesis: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2000).

¹¹ Interview with a retired senior official of SOA who was directly involved in this incident, Beijing, July 2013.

¹² Interview with a retired scientist, who was familiar with the “Wan’antan Incident”. Also, Chan Zhiqiang, Executive Editor of Chinese National Geography Magazine, interviewed Jiang Shaoren, then Commander-in-Chief of “Experiment 2” with responsibility for contacts and coordination with the supervising agencies. See Shan Zhiqiang, “The 1994 Sino-Vietnamese Standoff Incident: A Huge Turning Point of China's Exploration of the Spratlys”, Shan Zhiqiang's blog, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_48bb0d010102e3qb.html. See Wang Peiyun, *Turbulent South China Sea* (Beijing: zuojia chubanshe, 2010).

¹³ Chan Zhiqiang, Executive Editor of Chinese National Geography Magazine, interviewed Jiang Shaoren, then Commander-in-Chief of “Experiment 2” with responsibility for contacts and coordination with the supervising agencies. See Shan Zhiqiang, “The 1994 Sino-Vietnamese Standoff Incident: A Huge Turning Point of China's Exploration of the Spratlys”, Shan Zhiqiang's blog, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_48bb0d010102e3qb.html. See Wang Peiyun, *Turbulent Sea*.

¹⁴ Interview with a retired senior official of the SOA who was directly involved in this incident and a senior PLA officer who was liaising with the SOA, Beijing, July 2013.

¹⁵ Interview with a retired senior official of the SOA, 2013.

¹⁶ Interview with a retired senior official of the SOA, 2013.

¹⁷ China Academy of South China Sea Studies, "Origin and Ending of the Petroleum (Exploration) Contract on 'Wan'anbei-21'", November 24, 1995, http://dabei2006.blog.hexun.com/64973969_d.html.

¹⁸ This was explained in greater details in Chapter 4.

¹⁹ Interview with a retired senior official of the SOA, 2013.

²⁰ Interview with a retired senior official of the SOA, 2013.

²¹ The abandoning of the facilities on Mischief till 2004 was based on the interview with a retired senior official of the SOA in 2013. However, a Chinese media story contradicted with this account. According to this story, in the latter half of 1998, Chinese workers built four three-storey buildings on Mischief, protected by the PLAN warship, making Mischief a permanent military bridgehead for China. See Chen Minle, "Two Mischief Incidents, the Philippines Did Not Get Any Benefit," *Yangzi wanbao*, October 27, 2014, http://www.yangtse.com/huanqiubolan/2014-10-27/329909_2.html.

²² Ibid.

²³ Victor Robert Lee, "South China Sea: China's Unprecedented Spratlys Building Program," *The Diplomat*, April 25/2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/south-china-sea-chinas-unprecedented-spratlys-building-program/>.

²⁴ Barry Naughton, "Chinese Economic Policy and U.S.-China Economic Relations," paper for presentation at Center for American Studies, Fudan University, 12 March 2011, p. 1.

²⁵ "China surpasses U.S. to become largest world economy," *Fox News*, December 6, 2014, available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/12/06/china-surpasses-us-to-become-largest-world-economy/>.

²⁶ This contributed to the emergence of the rebalancing strategy of the U.S. in 2011. Arguably, it is the most important redirection of the US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War.

²⁷ The U.S. State Department spelled out its policies towards the South China Sea disputes in July 2009, through testimonies of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scot Marciel and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Scher to the Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Marciel rejected Chinese claims to territorial waters and maritime zones in the South China Sea for being "not consistent with international law". Marciel noted that the United States has "a vital interest in maintaining stability, freedom of navigation, and the right to lawful commercial activity in East Asia's waterways". Marciel also criticized China for intimidation against American oil and gas companies working with Vietnamese partners. See Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary Scot Marciel, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Washington, DC, 15 July 2009. Also, Michael D. Swaine and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Assertive Behavior—Part Two: The Maritime Periphery," *China Leadership Monitor* 35 (2011) pp.1-29.

²⁸ Jia Xiudong "Three-fold Strategic Purposes of the U.S. Stirring Water in South China Sea," *Outlook Magazine*, 06/ 1, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-06/01/c_127865362_2.htm; "MFA: The U.S. Not a Direct Actor of the South China Sea, Shall Stop Stirring Water and Making Troubles," *China Daily*, May 25, 2015, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2015-05-25/162631873739.shtml>.

²⁹ A PLAN officer said, "these neighboring countries, notably Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines, are a swarm of dogs raised by the U.S. outside China's house. They will be let out barking and grinding their teeth as long as China tries to step outside its house and the U.S. is somehow displeased. That is the essence of the hedging policy of the U.S. towards China." Interview with a naval officer, Beijing, October 28, 2013.

³⁰ Wang Haibin, "How to Break China's Sea Power Dilemma?", *shehui guancha zazhi* (Social Outlook), Issue 5 of 2009; Yang Zewei, "The Principle of 'Shelving Disputes and Joint Development': Dilemma and Wayout", *Jiangsu daxue xuebao, shehui kexueban* (Journal of Jiangsu University, Social Science Edition), Issue 3, Volume 13, May 2011; Tong Weihua, "The Conflict between 'Shelving Disputes' and 'Joint Development' in the South China Sea and Adjustment of Our Strategy," *zhongguo haiyang daxue xuebao, shehui kexueban* (Journal of Ocean University of China, Social Sciences Edition), Issue 6 of 2011.

³¹ Conversation with a senior PLA officer, 2012.

³² Lampton provided an insightful analysis of the four trends of transformation in China's foreign policy-making, which included pluralization and decentralization. See Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-making Process," pp. 12-19.

³³ 2003 was marked by a series of netizens-organized petitions and events that aroused Chinese public attentions and exerted pressure on the Chinese government to take tougher positions against Japan. The petition was initiated after dozens of Chinese construction workers in Qiqihar were injured and one was killed by five drums of mustard gas left from the wartime Japanese occupation in August 2003. Within a month, a million signatures were collected through an alliance of several Chinese websites to protest the Japanese government and demand a settlement. Two weeks later, Japan again aroused mass attention on Chinese internet, with a group of 400 Japanese businessmen hired 500 local Chinese prostitutes for a weekend sex party in Zhuhai of Guangdong Province, which happened to be 72nd anniversary of Japan's invasion of China. With the dispute over the "comfort woman" issue still left unsolved, this incident, though of purely individual behavior, aroused great angers among Chinese netizens. An on-line petition for boycotting Japan's Asahi beer garnered 1.28 million signatures in two hours. See James Reilly, *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 199-200.

³⁴ Demographic descriptions about Chinese netizens could be found in Chapter 5.

³⁵ Interview with a retired senior official of SOA who participated directly in the founding of CMS, Beijing, 2013.

³⁶ In China's negotiation with Vietnam on land border in the 1990s, SOA strongly advocated to leverage Vietnam by placing the maritime territory together with the land border in the negotiations, which the MFA dismissed. In the negotiation on the fishery agreement with South Korea, SOA officials complained that MFA ignored their advice and cut off the most lucrative fishing ground in the Yellow Sea, where Chinese fishermen traditionally fished, to South Korea. This agreement "squeezed Chinese fishermen's space for survivals" and increased rather than decreased Sino-ROK tensions over fishing as some Chinese fishermen, pressured by life, continuously took risks and conducted illegal fishing in this ground belonging to South Korea after 2000. Interview with multiple current and retired SOA officials. Also, See Lei Zhihua, " 'Political Debts' of Fishing Disputes," *nanfengchuang zazhi*, issue 12 of 2012, <http://www.nfcmag.com/article/3489.html>.

China and South Korea in the Yellow Sea Fisheries Agreement the "gold farms", but also the Chinese fishermen's traditional fishing grounds allocated to the ROK. With the depletion of coastal fishery resources, ROK Fisheries Agreement further squeeze the living space of Chinese fishermen, leading some Chinese fishermen driven by the interests of select "desperate"

³⁷ Gao Zhiguo, a senior official of SOA and director of the Institute of State Maritime Development and Strategy under the SOA, "Regarding the Proposal of Devising China's National Maritime Strategy", A proposal to the National People's Congress, March 17, 2006, <http://npc.people.com.cn/GB/28320/58835/58841/4209538.html>; also *Xinhua News Agency*, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-02/09/content_1305101.htm.

³⁸ See "Hu Jintao Emphasized China as An Oceanic Great Power and A Strong Navy Is Needed," *PLA Daily*, December 28, 2006, <http://jczs.news.sina.com.cn/2006-12-28/0551422818.html>; and Lu Shuiming and Chen Lu, "Tough Maritime Situation", *dangdai junshi wenzhai*, September 26, 2005, <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/8221/51757/42066/53575/3726258.html>.

³⁹ China Eclipses U.S. as Biggest Trading Nation, Bloomberg Business News, February November 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-02-09/china-passes-u-s-to-become-the-world-s-biggest-trading-nation>.

⁴⁰ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-first Century* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), p. 44.

⁴¹ Interview with a retired senior official at State Oceanic Administration, Beijing, August 27, 2013.

⁴² In a public speech in 2012, Xi emphasized "respects for core and important interests" while expanding strategic consensus" when speaking on how to solve (territorial) differences and frictions. See Xi Jinping's talk at the World Peace Forum, *Xinhua News Agency*, July 7, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-07/07/c_112383083.htm. Xi reiterated his thinking in the Politburo's eighth study session in 2013. Xi said, "(We shall) protect national maritime rights and interests, and strive to transform the protection of maritime rights (*haiyang weiquan*) in a holistic way. We love peace and adhere to the road of peaceful development, but will never give up the legitimate rights and

interests. Most importantly, we shall not (adhere to peaceful development) at the expense of national core interests. We have to balance between two strategic interest: maintenance of stability (*weiwen*) and maintenance of (maritime) rights and interests (*weiquan*).” See Xi Jinping, “Further Promote Concerns and Awareness about Ocean and Maritime Strategy, Drive the Building of Maritime Power,” Xinhua News Agency, July 31, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-07/31/c_116762285.htm. Also: Teng Jianqun, “Safeguarding Stability or Maritime Rights, An Inevitable Choice for China’s Diplomacy,” *lianhe zaobao*, August 07, 2012.

⁴³ Lyle J. Goldstein, *Five Dragons Stirring Up the Sea: Challenge and Opportunity in China’s Improving Maritime Enforcement Capabilities* (Newport, Rhode Island: China Maritime Studies Institute of U.S. Naval War College, 2010), www.usnwc.edu/Research---Gaming/China-Maritime-Studies-Institute.aspx.

⁴⁴ Luo Sha, “State Oceanic Administration collected fines over RMB 670 million”, *Beijing Daily*, October 26, 2013, http://bjrb.bjd.com.cn/html/2013-10/26/content_119920.htm.

⁴⁵ Interviews with SOA officials and PLAN officers, 2013-2014.

⁴⁶ Captain Raul Pedrozo, “*Close Encounters At Sea: The USNS Impeccable Incident*”, *Naval War College Review*, Summer 2009, Vol. 62, No. 3, <http://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/c02742eb-6da5-47db-91d0-4ae01ba755e3/Close-Encounters-at-Sea--The-USNS-Impeccable-Incid.aspx>.

⁴⁷ See Pentagon Statement on Chinese Incident with U.S. Navy, *Fox News*, March 9, 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/03/09/raw-data-pentagonstatement-chinese-incident-navy/>; Press Release, Jim Garamone, Armed Forces Press Service, Chinese Vessels Shadow, Harass Unarmed U.S. Surveillance Ship, March 9, 2009; Pentagon: Chinese Vessels Harassed Unarmed Ship, *BREITBART*, March 9, 2009, http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D96QJ2S00&show_article=1.

⁴⁸ A senior official at SOA CMS revealed that the action was not pre-approved by the MFA, SAO, and the PLAN HQ. Interview with a senior official at SOA, Beijing, October 2013. This account was contradicted by a government official, also a renowned expert, in Hainan Province who is familiar to China’s maritime security policy. Interview with a local government official, Beijing, 2014. The author could not determine whose account is accurate as there is no credible collaborative interview and evidence to support either of them. According to regular procedure, such an action participated by a PLA ship shall be pre-approved by the PLA GSD.

⁴⁹ Interview with a senior official at SOA, Beijing, October 28, 2013.

⁵⁰ Daniel Ten Kate, “South China Sea Oil Rush Risks Clashes as U.S. Emboldens Vietnam on Claims”, *Bloomberg*, May 27, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-26/s-china-sea-oil-rush-risks-clashes-as-u-s-emboldens-vietnam.html>.

⁵¹ Interview with a scholar at the Institute of International Studies under the Foreign Ministry, summer, 2013.

⁵² Interview with officials of SOA/CMS and PLA officers, 2013-2014.

⁵³ The Scarborough Shoal is known under Filipino vernacular as “Panatag Shoal”, and, to China, Huangyan Island. The shoal is a triangle-shaped 150 square kilometers of barren reefs and rocky islets, roughly 135 miles from the Philippines and 543 miles from China.

⁵⁴ Paolo Romero, “*House approves Phl baseline law*”, *The Philippine Star*, February 3, 2012, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/773554/house-approves-phl-baseline-law>.

⁵⁵ “2012 South China Sea Developments”, *Global Security Organization*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/south-china-sea-2012.htm>.

⁵⁶ Roel Landingin in Manila and Kathrin Hille, Philippines and China in naval stand-off, Financial Times, April 11, 2012, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2bcc70f2-837f-11e1-ab78-00144feab49a.html#axzz3eelAk2KS>.

⁵⁷ Renato Cruz De Castro, "China's Realpolitik Approach in the South China Sea Dispute: The Case of the 2012 Scarborough Shoal Stand-Off", a paper submitted to the "Managing Tensions in the South China Sea" conference held by CSIS on June 5-6, 2013, http://csis.org/files/attachments/130606_DeCastro_ConferencePaper.pdf.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The quote was from the local branch of CMS, according to an interview with a scholar of China Institute of International Studies, the think tank under the Foreign Ministry, summer 2012.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Interview with a retired senior colonel who worked for the PLA GSD, Shanghai, Summer 2012.

⁶² Interview with Bonnie Glaser, Washington DC, 2012; Interview with an anonymous diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in Washington DC, November 2012; Interview with Dr. Ely Ratner, Washington DC, December 2013.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Foreign Ministry : China has never promised to withdraw ships from Huangyan Island", China Daily Net, July 19, 2012.

⁶⁵ "China and Philippines end fishing standoff," *The Guardian*, April 14, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/14/china-philippines-end-fishing-standoff>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Christine O. Avendaño, "Aquino: PH ships to go back if Chinese don't leave Panatag Shoal", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 21, 2012, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/40753/aquino-philippines-may-send-ships-back-to-scarborough#ixzz2juBOzr00>

⁶⁸ Zhang Jie, "Huangyan Model and the Shift of China's Maritime Strategy," *dongnanya yanjiu* (Southeast Asia Studies), Issue 4 of 2013, pp. 25-31.

⁶⁹ For example, in a conference hosted by Chinese Association of Pacific Studies, an officer of the East China Sea Fleet explicitly advocated that Chinese scholars should do more research to study and summarize the Huangyan Island model because it provided important guidance to China's future maritime law-enforcement. See reference 3, Zhang Jie, "Huangyan Model and the Shift of China's Maritime Strategy," *dongnanya yanjiu* (Southeast Asia Studies), Issue 4 of 2013, pp. 31.

⁷⁰ Qin Hong, "We Have Sufficient Methods Facing The Philippines", *People's Daily Overseas Edition*, May 8, 2012.

⁷¹ Interview with Bonnie Glaser. A senior PLA officer, interviewed by the author, indicated that China did not realize its promise in the end because of the disagreements from the CMS and PLA. On the standoff, neither the CMS nor the PLA would have listened to the MFA and the CMS, standing on the frontline of the crisis, has capability of doing what they believe is right. Interview with a senior officer in Beijing in summer, 2012.

⁷² Interview with the Chinese diplomat in Washington DC in November 2012. This Chinese diplomat's view was partially confirmed by Dr. Ely Ratner, a former U.S. Official who worked in external political unit of the State Department under Dr. Kurt Campbell. There was not any written document regarding this negotiation. All commitments were made verbally. This negotiation with Chinese diplomats was filled with vague diplomatic languages and ambivalent messages. The Chinese government "may be correct to the letter of the law, but not the spirit," according Dr. Ely Ratner.

⁷³ The institutional restructuring of government agencies announced in March 2013 revealed how Xi evaluated the roles of the five competing government agencies involved in maritime affairs management. SOA achieved a partial win but the CMS under the SOA was the real winner. The top goal of the SOA to elevate its bureaucratic status to a full ministry did not realize as the State Council made a grave decision to dismantle the traditionally powerful and resourceful Ministry of Railway. However, the SOA/CMS will take over three other agencies, the Maritime Police and Border Control (BCD) under the powerful Ministry of Public Security (MPS), the Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC) under the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Maritime Anti-smuggling Police under the General Administration of Customs (GAC). Only the Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), under the Ministry of Transportation, directly linked to International Maritime Organization (IMO) and responsible for ship examination, technical management and search and rescue operations, was not folded into the restructure plan. Liu Cigui was named director and party secretary of the SOA as well as political commissar of the new China Coast Guard (CCG). Vice Minister of MPS, who has a status and benefit of a full minister, was assigned to head the new CCG (which has only an administrative status of Division under a ministry) while continuing his job in MPS. CMS's staffing increased from 2900 in 1983 to close to 10,000 in 2013. With this overhaul and integration, the CMS/CCG will grow to at least 20,000 to 30,000 staff after the force structure and management restructuring. CCG is entitled to inherit the budget of all these four agencies. Interview with retired and current officials of SOA and CMS, 2013-2014.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

This dissertation developed a “dynamic bargaining” thesis, which examines the two-level bargaining game among the PLA, the Party, and civilian foreign affairs system, in order to analyze the PLA’s role in China’s foreign and security policy-making process.

The level and type of policy influence the PLA exerts on China’s foreign and security policy after Deng Xiaoping’s initiation of reform and opening up in 1978 results from the complex interplay between two sets of bargaining interactions affecting “high” and “low” policy issues, and a changing mix of policy-related values and beliefs within the PLA. The “high” policy issues are those that require the top leader’s personal intervention. Such policies are typically those with strategic significance to China’s core national interests and overall international well-being, contingencies that have a direct bearing on the imminent threat of war, and those in which bureaucracies cannot reach a consensus without the top leader’s intervention. The “low” policy issues are those tactical policies, which constitute the majority of policy decisions.

The basic level of policy influence the PLA exerts on the “high” policy issues – core contents or strategic guidelines for foreign and security policy – results from the workings of a “reliance-control model” that describes relations between the top Party leader and the PLA leadership. This relationship largely determines the degree of policy access, and hence direct influence, that the PLA enjoys over basic policy outcomes.

At lower levels of the policy process, which bureaucracies try to control through mechanisms and procedures, the PLA’s influence over the “low” policy issues results

primarily from a near-autonomous process of bureaucratic bargaining centered primarily on the changing dynamics of the PLA-MFA competition for influence. This bureaucratic interaction operates according to its own rules and logic, largely independent of the Party-military dynamic. In both areas of policy bargaining (“high” and “low”), but especially in “high” policy areas, the content of the PLA’s policy preferences largely reflects the relative priorities that the PLA places over three sets of values: an inherent inward-oriented versus outward-oriented outlook; the overall level of professionalization versus imposed politicization; and the extent to which a notable inter-service rivalry exists.

In order to properly evaluate the PLA’s influence in foreign and security policy, it is imperative to examine the evolution of the PLA’s mindset, the trajectory of Party-military relations, and the bureaucratic bargaining process itself. This study rejects the notion that the PLA, or any other bureaucratic actor, has a fixed set of interests that are incontrovertible. By emphasizing that bureaucracies have an historic legacy, that their “mentality” evolves, and that bureaucratic power waxes and wanes, all of which need to be factored into an analysis of institutions’ roles, this dissertation argues for a more complex approach. While this approach adds uncertainty to the analysis, given that multiple variables are at play and they can move in different directions, the merits of this approach greatly exceed its shortcomings. Any scholarly endeavor needs to be honest about what happens in the real world, rather than constructing a compartmentalized virtual world for the convenience of parsimony. This basic starting point is also the core of the “dynamic bargaining” thesis that this study puts forward to examine the PLA’s bargaining behavior.

Review of the “Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis

The “dynamic bargaining” thesis has three components: the PLA’s “mentality,” Party-military relations, and the bureaucratic policy process.

The PLA’s Mentality: Three Dynamics

The PLA is a military force in transition, with dynamics – three sets of trends and countertrends – that will decide its motivation to intervene in the policy process: inward-oriented versus outward-oriented mentality; professionalization versus politicization; and unity versus the rise of inter-service rivalry.

First, the PLA is torn between its interest in exerting influence on China’s foreign and security policies, and its preoccupation with its internal mission. Holding a progressive and moderate view toward the necessity of China’s continued economic and political reforms, the PLA officer corps is at the same time cognizant of the difficulties China will face as it continues to enact reforms. Therefore, preoccupied with its mission to serve as the Party’s last line of defense, the PLA does not have the desire to seek enemies to slay. Instead, given its political orientation as a “progressive moderate” force in China’s domestic politics, the PLA has an acute sense of the daunting domestic challenges China faces and the potential catastrophic impact that these challenges can have on China’s future if they are not addressed. Therefore, the PLA is conservative and realistic about the efficacy of using force and lacks the motivation to lead the country down a path of aggression and expansion.

Both the first and second case studies – the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese war, and China’s failure to readjust its Taiwan policy in a more militaristic and confrontational direction by adopting a timetable approach – reflect the PLA’s cautious tendency. In both instances, senior PLA commanders held reservations about going to war or committing China to a trajectory of war (although the PLA was more cautious in the first case and less so in the second one). The PLA’s continuous professionalization has mixed effects on its propensity to advocate war. Although professionalization elevates the principle of civilian centrality, it makes the PLA more budget-conscious, “no-war anxious” (anxious about military inertia and its potential lack of military effectiveness since it has not fought a war in over three decades), and sensitive to its institutional interests. Therefore, the PLA is more “outward-oriented” and attuned to external threats. It is likely not seeking major armed confrontation, but may be more welcoming to continuous friction and low-intensity war of limited scope, if it is highly confident in its ability to prevail.

Second, the rise of services, especially the Navy and the Air Force, opens up the possibility of increasingly independent behavior that is not typical of the PLA as a whole. These two services are relatively new and are more insular to the outside world in terms of international exchanges and engagements to discuss strategic thinking and policy deliberations. However, they represent the tip of the spear of the PLA’s power projection, benefiting from the PLA’s external missions by receiving greater resources, prestige, and more space for self-expression. Therefore, both the Navy and the Air Force are more supportive of an “outward-oriented” outlook for the PLA as a whole.

Inter-service rivalry, in the Western sense, will take years or decades to develop in the PLA. The competition for resources and attention occurs mostly between land-

locked and coastal military regions, which impacts the PLA's military planning and preparations. That said, the PLAN, strongly motivated to pursue a strategy emphasizing power projection, is gaining both more resources and a more exalted status among the services. The third case study, on China's maritime security policy, demonstrates the PLAN's strong motivation since 1985 to steer China's maritime policy in a more assertive direction, but at the same time highlights its weak influence throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Yet in recent years the PLAN's influence over the final policy outcome has been growing, especially relative to the MFA.

Third, the PLA has a shorter decision-making chain, and its bureaucracies that participate in the decision-making process are more hierarchical and rank-conscious compared with those within the civilian foreign affairs system, which means the PLA can more easily and quickly reach an internal consensus than its civilian counterpart. Such efficiency matters, particularly during a quickly evolving crisis when, under time constraints, issues need to be put in context, narrated, and presented to the top leadership. Those organizations that have the ability to assess the context and formulate policy recommendations first can frame the issue and seize the initiative, thereby raising the probability that its preferred policies will be implemented.

Party-Military Relations: The Reliance-Control Model

The level of policy influence the PLA can exert on basic foreign and security policy issues is a function of the state of Party-military relations, as generated through the workings of the reliance-control model. This model is governed by seven tenets:

First, the political and power relationship between the top leader and the PLA largely determines the level of policy influence the PLA can exert. Second, this relationship varies on the basis of the top leader's *political reliance* on the PLA for political support and the top leader's ability to establish *effective control* over the PLA. Third, the PLA has the greatest ability to influence foreign and security policy when the top leader is highly reliant on the PLA's political support and yet is able to establish effective control over the PLA, exemplified by Jiang Zemin's later years and the Xi Jinping era (judged by the limited evidence available thus far). Fourth, the PLA is least able to influence such policies when the top leader is not strongly reliant on the PLA's political support and yet exercises effective control over the PLA, for example in Mao's and Deng's era. Fifth, the PLA largely gains influence over policy formation from its access to the "high" policies that the top leader provides to the PLA, and therefore access largely leads to influence. Sixth, the PLA is also able to influence policy in an indirect and less predictable, and often negative way, when the top leader relies on the PLA for support but is unable to establish effective control, as demonstrated by Jiang's early period and Hu Jintao's era. During such times, the PLA often acts to exercise its relative power, including by stalling the implementation of policies, attempting to mold public opinion to undermine the top leader's policy preferences, and acting uncooperatively with other policy actors.

China's Party-military relationship must maintain a delicate balance. The Party and the PLA share the same bottom-line, namely that stability needs to be maintained at all costs. However, the PLA differs from the Party in its sense of urgency and overall approach to reforms. Given that polarizing internal debates within the Party have largely

ceased, the Party is more likely to carry out reforms while trying to hold on to its power and continue its dominance, even if challengers enter China's political landscape. The PLA is generally open to all approaches to reforms, as long as stability is maintained. Such differentiation between the PLA and the Party is a result of the Party's decay and weakening authority, as well as the ongoing process in which the PLA modernizes, professionalizes, specializes, and increasingly transforms its identity away from a Party-Army in spirit, which further weakens the Party's rule.¹ In the post-Deng era, the top leaders do not have the same deep and organic bonds with the PLA that Mao and Deng had. As a result, these leaders face far more difficulties establishing authority and effective control over the PLA. Therefore, this tug of war for control and influence emerges as leaders seek to control soldiers in order to serve their political needs, while soldiers seek access and influence, as well as the realization of their institutional interests.

Under the reliance-control model, which can only be employed to assess China after 1978, the top leader's *political reliance* on the PLA serves as the basic condition for the level of the PLA's influence in policies. In order for the top leader to grant the military influence, he must be assured that during times of need – intraparty struggles, political jockeying to consolidate and sustain his political power, and large-scale social upheavals – he can rely on the military's allegiance and political support. Political reliance is the first and foremost necessary condition for such Party-military bargaining to occur.

The extent to which the top leader is able to establish *effective control* over the PLA during his tenure is the second condition that helps determine the access the top leader provides the PLA with, and hence the level of influence the PLA exerts in policies.

Political interference from previous CMC chairman or chairmen necessitates politicized campaigns in the PLA to sideline officers. Unless the top leader establishes effective control, the PLA listens to other master(s), which in Chinese politics constitutes the most serious political danger to the top leader. Therefore, together with political reliance, the extent to which the top leader is able to build effective control is the second necessary condition for the top leader to give trust and access to the PLA leadership.

Simply put, unless the top leader is sure that the PLA will stand with him when he needs its support, he will treat the PLA as a threat rather than as a neutral factor. If the top leader both politically relies on and effectively controls the military, the military will become one of the leader's strong power bases, and therefore the leader will naturally empower the PLA to a certain extent, granting it trust and access and thus allowing it to exert influence over policies. If the top leader is unable to establish effective control, he will treat the military as a threat and minimize or obstruct its influence. The Party-military influence is in this sense mutual and dynamic.

The top leader's establishment of effective control over the PLA does not necessarily result in the top leader pursuing policies that the PLA desires. The PLA is a huge bureaucracy, with a top layer of leadership and then middle-to-senior officers who all count to a certain extent in shaping the PLA's policy positions. Arguably, the leadership of the PLA counts more than lower-ranking officers. However, even so, the PLA leadership still needs to transform personal preferences through organizational procedures into a bureaucratic position. In this process, many officers will have an input, and it will be difficult for the PLA leadership to completely control it. Therefore, if officers in functional capacities significantly disagree on a certain policy position, and if

that disagreement is pervasive and broad across agencies, then even the PLA leadership will find it hard to control the result. Thus, supporting the top leader does not make the PLA leadership a willful tool of the top leader. This is supported by the second case study, which analyzes the timetable strategy. After Jiang established effective control over the PLA, the PLA leadership provided political support for Jiang's leadership but nonetheless resisted the timetable strategy Jiang tried to advocate. Even though Zhang Wannian was loyal to Jiang, as a professional soldier, Zhang could not make such an adventurous, high-risk military decision. That is where the top leader and a military loyal to him differ: the PLA never openly opposed the timetable strategy, but it resisted it while simultaneously leveraging it to obtain a higher budget and accelerate military modernization programs.

The top leader establishes effective control over the PLA generally in two ways. First, it is fundamentally important to replace officers, especially those in the top military leadership, with generals he has cultivated and trusts. Second, it is crucial to obtain popular support among the PLA's rank and file, since military leaders emerge from among the rank and file and have to lead the lower-ranking officers and soldiers.

The establishment of effective control, through subordination of the military, can be facilitated by two factors: the level of the previous top leader or leaders' lingering influence, as well as the strength and cohesiveness of the networks of interests forged under their influence; and the degree to which the military is generally willing to *accept* a particular leader's control.

Xi Jinping established effective control over the PLA relatively quickly because he had advantages with regard to both of the aforementioned factors. First, Xi had a

relatively easier time consolidating his power in the PLA because Jiang and Hu competed with each other for control over the PLA during Hu's tenure, and by the end of Hu's tenure Jiang was already weakened and Hu had no interest in holding on to power after he retired in 2012. Therefore, Xi did not have to contend with his predecessors' lingering influence. Second, the PLA had a greater willingness to be put under Xi's control due to several factors. Xi was the son of a reform-minded first-generation leader who had legitimacy and seniority in the PLA's eyes. Additionally, Xi had brief experience as former Defense Minister Geng Biao's secretary, and surrounded himself with a wide network of personal friends and advisers who understood military affairs, which earned him the PLA officer corps' respect before he took office. PLA officers widely perceived Xi as being reform-minded, a message transmitted before Xi took office through his preexisting power base in the military, composed mostly of princelings who are close to Xi. Xi's ability to implement "eight rules" for tightening military discipline helped him win PLA officers' respect. These traits gave Xi clear advantages in quickly establishing control over the military, which both Jiang and Hu lacked when they assumed power.

That said, Xi ultimately consolidated his effective control over the military not just by making a favorable impression, but also by launching a politicized anti-corruption campaign, which removed opposing factions' powerful supporters. Therefore, removing the networks of officers who were loyal to previous master(s) is still the most important method for the top leader to establish effective control. However, it should be recognized that Xi's relatively easy path to establishing effective control reinforced his willingness to rely on the military's support and treat it as a core power base of his leadership in pushing through bolder reforms and systematic changes.

Bureaucratic Policy Process: Four Rules of the Game

The bureaucratic process through which China makes foreign and security policies is complicated by the Party's initial intention to make the military "organically" separated from the government. Due to the PLA's history of guarding the Party's victory, ensuring its survival, and supplanting it as the top authority during times of national chaos, soldiers enjoy a place in the Party-dominated power structure that diplomats simply cannot match. However, this does not mean that the military wins every policy battle, as there are examples in which diplomats outflanked the military during policy debates. As the MFA, the leading bureaucracy in the civilian foreign affairs system, continuously professionalizes, its policy positions increasingly differ from the PLA's. Due to the organizations' distinct mandates, bureaucratic interests, and cost/benefit calculations, the PLA and the MFA are increasingly arrayed against each other in the lower-level process of foreign and security policy-making.

Since 1978, China has developed a set of sophisticated and inclusive foreign and security policy-making mechanisms and platforms that reflect the interests of stakeholders. Most decisions on foreign and security affairs at the tactical level are reached through a process of consensus-building and interactive bargaining. The PLA's level of influence over tactical and operational levels of policy relative to the MFA depends largely on its bureaucratic bargaining with the MFA. The struggle has operated on the basis of four rules of the game, namely the advantage of: early entry during times of overwhelming external threats; strong allies/weak opponents (disadvantage of strong opponents); strong motivations; and supportive public opinion.

Overall, the increasing importance of the bureaucratic struggle and the specific rules of the game have together affected the PLA's influence on foreign and security policy in a number of ways: first, the PLA's influence increases during times of sustained militarized tensions; second, the PLA's influence increases when it is joined by strong allies that support its position; third, when the PLA advocates an assertive approach to an issue, it can increase its influence in the policy-making process by mobilizing netizens; fourth, when the PLA prefers compromises and a de-escalation of tensions, netizens constrain its influence; and finally, the PLA's influence increases when it is motivated by a particular issue to such an extent that the MFA decides not to oppose the PLA and instead goes along with it.

“Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis: Findings

The overall workings of the above three sets of variables suggest several valuable findings:

First, the level of PLA influence over high-level foreign and security policy from the Mao/Deng era to the present has not changed in a linear fashion from low to high. Initial low levels of (generally cautious) PLA policy influence evident during the 1960s and 1970s have given way to alternating cycles of low-high-low-high influence during the two Jiang Zemin (pre- and post-Deng consolidation), Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping eras, though the analysis of Xi's era is still partial and rudimentary.

Second, the PLA's bureaucratic competition with the MFA has become more intense since the first-generation of revolutionary leaders has passed away – the “interlocking directorate” – and continues to do so, reflecting increasing differences

between PLA and MFA views and interests, and the malfunctioning and even dysfunctional “trinity” (Party-State-Military) arrangement, which organically separated the two bureaucracies. Both vertical and horizontal policy coordination and consultation mechanisms, though multiplied in numbers, could hardly bridge the deepening divide. The rise of new and powerful policy actors has accelerated the decline of the MFA’s control over foreign and security policy. Even as the PLA had a lower level of influence under Hu Jintao, this competition still became more favorable to the PLA because the MFA’s bureaucratic power and influence declined even more drastically than that of the PLA. As such, the PLA’s influence was weak, but the MFA’s influence was even weaker.

Third, the PLA exhibited mixed tendencies in policy interventions, displaying increasingly “outward-oriented” policy preferences but at the same time constrained by its internal mission. The PLA’s continuous professionalization has mixed effects on its propensity to advocate war. Although professionalization elevates the principle of civilian centrality, it makes the PLA more budget-conscious, “no-war anxious,” and sensitive to its institutional interests. Therefore, the PLA becomes more comfortable interacting with foreign militaries, but is increasingly attuned to external threats. The PLA’s policy preference is increasingly more reflective of inter-service differences, with the more “outward-oriented” PLA Navy and Air Force gaining more resources and higher status than in the past, but remaining less sophisticated and open than the Army. As a result of its own evolution, the PLA is likely not seeking major armed confrontation, but may be more welcoming to continuous friction and low-intensity war of limited scope, if it is highly confident in its ability to prevail.

“Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis: Implications

This dissertation examines the two-level bargaining game of the PLA in both Party-military relations and in lower-level bureaucratic politics. The bargaining in Party-military relations is conducted on terrain that is fundamentally different from that of bureaucratic politics, in terms of the significance of this relationship to Chinese politics. The following section will examine the implications of this thesis for China’s civil-military relations, the PLA’s influence on policy, and U.S. policy-makers.

Implications of the “Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis for China’s Civil-Military Relations

Since 1978, the Party has faced increasing challenges to its legitimacy and authority from an empowered society, while the existing political structures the Party dominates could not effectively solve the problem of systematic corruption, ineffective governance, and a lack of officials’ accountability. The Party’s crisis of legitimacy and authority has thus far been ameliorated by China’s rapid economic growth and modernization and the emergence of a middle class that owes its newfound wealth to the existing system. While this crisis has not come to a head due to China’s economic modernization, the root cause remains. As China’s society is empowered and its citizens become aware of their rights, the delayed crisis could violently erupt if a solution is not found and enacted in time. More than ever, the Party in the post-Deng era needs the PLA to serve as its last line of defense during any potential social and political upheaval.

Within Party-military relations, the PLA differs with the Party over two areas, namely the direction and pace of political reform. The PLA officer corps is open to a wide range of political reforms, as long as they meet one absolutely necessary condition:

the maintenance of China's overall stability. The Party realizes it is faced with a crisis of governance and legitimacy, and therefore it recognizes that it must enact further political reforms, but it will still try to hold on to its power and dominant position in Chinese politics. The PLA officer corps has a deeper sense of crisis and the urgency of reforms than the Party, and does not believe the Party is moving quickly enough to enact reforms. This disagreement between the Party and the PLA over reform's direction and pace makes the Party even more reliant on the PLA.

The PLA officer corps' support for political reform results from its political nature as a group of "progressive moderates" in Chinese domestic politics, its realism about the legitimacy and governance crisis the Party faces, and the PLA's institutional interest in full professionalization. The PLA officer corps aspires for professionalization and, except for the political officers, loathes the political commissar system. The political commissar system's removal would undermine an indispensable piece of the Party's foundation. The PLA supports and encourages political reform, but it is wrong to assume that it will take any action to rebel against the Party. The PLA will not be the first mover in this complicated and consequential game. Therefore, the only way to remove the system of politicization, which obstructs the PLA's professionalization, is through nationalization of the PLA, which, the PLA insists, has to be one component that is crucial and necessary to China's democratization either in the western sense or a limited inter-Party competition. However, the PLA agrees that it is the Party that has to make the decision and chooses that path. The officer corps is the largest organized interest group that is supportive of China's political reform, if the Party chooses to advance it. That is why, even if nationalization of the army could mean that the PLA will lose a certain

amount of privilege in terms of resources and influence, the PLA officer corps still embraces it.

It is fair to ask whether by differentiating itself from the Party and advocating becoming a professional national army the PLA is moving toward professionalization. In the Western literature on civil-military relations, a professional military, ideally, is one that is “politically sterile and neutral,”² “with the degree of its professionalism measured as the inverse of its military intervention”,³ and “a healthy state (of civil-military relations) is that its military establishment shall remain merely the executive will of the sovereign power.”⁴ In the real world, Huntington recognized that after World War II “national security policy became primarily a matter of negotiations conducted among the different executive agencies – both civilian and military.”⁵ Even Huntington’s normative theory that a high degree of professionalism and corporate orientation incline the military professional toward a low political posture is challenged by several Western analysts, including W. H. Morris Jones.⁶ As Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett argued, Huntington’s concept that professionalism removes the military from politics can no longer hold because of the fusion of bureaucracy and politics.⁷ In the literature on China’s civil-military relations, Jencks, Joffe, and others agreed that Huntington’s objective/subjective control thesis is not applicable to China.⁸ Joffe specifically argued that Mao and Deng ordered the PLA’s political involvement in the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, and that the PLA loyally followed its orders.⁹

This dissertation explains that professionalization drives the PLA to further differentiate itself from the Party, which makes the Chinese case of how its military developed and strengthened its professionalism distinctly different than that of Western

democratic countries. Professionalization of a Party-Army like the PLA has to include two parts: differentiation/separation, and civilian control, which are intimately inter-related. The PLA's professionalization starts with the differentiation and separation of its professional/institutional interests from the Party. Otherwise, it would be merely a tool for the Party and an extension of the Party bureaucracy, which violates the military's "corporate spirits" and "expertise," two of the three foundations of military professionalism, as defined by Huntington.¹⁰ The case of the Soviet military illustrates how professionalization interacts with differentiation from the Party. The Party's control over the Soviet military was much less pervasive than the CCP's control over the Chinese military, and thus the Soviet military was widely viewed as a more professional force than the PLA, which partly explains its lack of intervention to save the Party as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990-1. Thus, is the Soviet military more or less professional than the PLA? In the Western sense, the Soviet military was not. However, if judged from the angle of protecting the sovereign state, the Soviet military was then indeed professional.

The gold standard for a professional army in the Western sense is whether high-level civilian control is realized over the military. In the Chinese case, this black-and-white picture becomes blurry, as "civilian" in the Chinese context is a more complex concept because this category includes both the Party and the State/government. If the "civilian" means the Party, no doubt the "civilians" still have pervasive, tight control, despite the cracks in Party-military relations. However, if "civilian" means the State/government, the growing trend seems to disfavor the government bureaucracies in relative power. It is not only confusing for outsiders, but also for the PLA itself. China's Constitution stipulates that the National People's Congress holds the ultimate sovereign

power. However, in reality, only the Party's control is mandated, while the state/government is viewed as a peer of the PLA. The political power structure is arranged in accordance with this principle. The PLA encountered this Party-State tension in 1989 when Zhao Ziyang, the Party's nominal head, intended to use the NPC's official, though hollow, ultimate authority to pass a resolution in order to override Deng, which eventually failed.¹¹ Some PLA officers who were supportive of Zhao chose inaction or vocal opposition to the establishment of martial law, and were subsequently court-martialed, discharged, or sidelined. The PLA has upheld the principle of civilian control, if one deems that the ultimate civilian authority is legitimately placed in the hands of the Party.¹² Civilian control has, however, been broken if one judges that the State/government, by China's Constitution, holds the ultimate sovereign power in China.

The reliance-control model presented in this dissertation accepts some of the factional politics model's conclusions, namely that the top leader's effective control over the PLA is still fundamentally established through and embodied by placing trusted officers in the PLA leadership. It also accepts the professionalization model's conclusion that the PLA officer corps and the PLA as an institution develop political and policy preferences based on the internalization of the tenets of professionalization and its corresponding transformation. Professionalization further deepens the differentiation between the PLA's and the Party's goals and interests, and increases professional soldiers' discontent with the continuation of the Party's political indoctrination of the military, as represented by the PLA's political commissar system. However, professionalization also explains the PLA's reluctance to play a more aggressive role in pushing the Party to reform, even though that is the direction the PLA supports. This

dissertation also accepts the main thesis of the conditional compliance or “give-and-take” model on the increased bargaining behavior between the Party and the PLA. The reliance-control model attempts to explain Party-military relations by pulling in the aforementioned models’ arguments to explain the dynamics of the bargaining relationship between the Party and the PLA, as both of them are evolving internally, with their goals, interests, power, and reliance upon each other changing.

Implications of the “Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis for the PLA’s Influence on Policy

As this dissertation indicates, the PLA’s influence in foreign and security policy has both a “ceiling” and a “floor”: the influence the PLA exerts in high-level politics is governed by whether the top leader politically relies on the PLA and has established effective control over the military; and the PLA operates as the last line of defense and deterrent even when the top leader does not accept its policy preference. In the lower-level policy process, where bureaucratic bargaining determines the level of the PLA’s influence, the PLA has to seek allies, namely other powerful policy actors or supportive public opinion, in order to prevail in the competition with the MFA. This indicates the limit (ceiling) of the PLA’s influence in the bureaucratic bargaining process, which is shaped by procedures and mechanisms. The PLA has a strong organizational capacity in intelligence gathering and policy implementation, which establishes the “floor” of its influence in this process.

The PLA’s influence in foreign and security policy will increase significantly when the top leader has a high-level of political reliance on the PLA’s support, and manages to establish effective control over the PLA. If China adequately reforms and

modernizes its political system so that its economic prosperity and political stability could be secured in a sustainable way, the PLA will become more committed to its external mission and it will have a stronger motivation to intervene in China's foreign and security policy. Even in these circumstances, it does not mean that China will become an aggressive, expansionist power, as the PLA is probably more realistic about military options and its capabilities than civilians. However, the continuous rise of nationalism among the Chinese public and the further fusion of the military with the rest of society, would constitute a real danger for the world and China itself.

Implications of the "Dynamic Bargaining" Thesis for American Policy-makers

As China and the U.S. enter a new age of deepening interdependence but an intensifying power imbalance, many in the U.S. are alarmed by China's "assertive behavior" and worried more about its intentions.¹³ Although some analysts conclude that the two are not fated to enter either a hot or cold war, others predict the return of "great power competition."¹⁴ Prescriptions given to Washington based on the above assessments then vary from a cautious approach of *not* "add(ing) to instability"¹⁵ and a moderate engagement-and-hedging approach,¹⁶ to aggressive balancing/countering against China's rise¹⁷ and "cost-imposition" to punish "China's bullying."¹⁸ This dissertation's findings offer several insights for American policy-makers:

While this research is not the first to make this point, it does support the thesis that due to a wide range of actors and internal dynamics influencing China's foreign and security policy-making process, policy outcomes are often not necessarily consistent with China's strategic goals and interests. Not dissimilar from U.S. policy-formulation, in

which a focused and highly mobilized interest group can make a significant difference in a certain policy area, in China a bureaucracy that is strongly motivated by its parochial bureaucratic interest can hijack the debate over a particular policy. Thus, a strong reaction by the U.S., taken without understanding the motivations and actors behind seemingly provocative actions, may have unintended consequences. Such actions could empower the segment of policy actors that the U.S. actually wants to undermine and diminish.

This study points to other, more nuanced applications. Perhaps most importantly, it is fundamentally mistaken to assume that the PLA is the source of aggressive nationalism. The PLA's own policy-making suffers from the pressure – often unwelcome – that radical netizens bring to bear on many policy areas. The PLA does manipulate public opinion to advance certain agendas, but by and large it is burdened and constrained by Chinese netizens' hypernationalistic expressions. The increasing fusion of domestic and foreign audiences creates great obstacles to the PLA's public expressions, making regular closed-door, high-level consultations the most effective way of engaging the PLA.

Third, the U.S. should open its military education institutions to PLA officers. The PLA is a military force in transition and there is no better way to influence such a force than by training its young and promising officers. Systematic exchange and training programs should especially target junior-to-mid-level PLA officers. Most foreign-trained PLA officers have received their overseas training in Russia, which inevitably translates into their deeper personal affinities for Russia.¹⁹ About 2,000 mid- to senior-level PLA officers received training in Russia between 1996 and 2002. Although these Russia-

trained PLA officers were relatively junior when receiving training in Russia, some have already been promoted to major positions at the level of deputy commander of a major military command and corps commander.²⁰ For example, two consecutive corps commanders of the PLA's most reputable 38th army from 2007 to 2013 were trained in Russia.²¹ As of 2013, three out of seven military regions were headed by Russia-trained officers.²² These PLA officers trained in Russia have served as a strong bond between the Chinese and Russian militaries, which bolstered bilateral political relations, despite various difficulties and challenges. In comparison, from 1996 to 2015 there have been no Chinese PLA officers studying at U.S. military academies.

Fourth, U.S. policy-makers should assume that any prolonged, intensified friction that potentially poses a severe security threat to China would guarantee a seat for the PLA at the table and may strengthen its influence relative to other policy actors. Based on the PLA's previous behaviors, examined in this dissertation, the PLA showed substantial caution and reluctance to engage in military confrontations. For instance, in the 1979 case, the PLA was not prepared to fight a large-scale war. In the Taiwan timetable case, the PLA was also not ready in the 1990s and early 2000s for a major confrontation, and many officers agreed with Jiang's goal but disagreed, based on the military logic, on the best path to reach the goal.

The past has proved that the PLA, though holding the most lethal capability, is not necessarily the most dangerous actor in the process. However, based on this dissertation's study of the PLA's mentality and motivations, as well as the changing landscape of the policy process, the PLA would be both prone and pressured to be more risk-taking. The budget pressure, hostile external environment, the PLA's internal changes, and the rise of

other, more vocal and motivated actors, make the PLA, though still militarily cautious and keenly aware about the escalation redline, probably increasingly welcoming to low-level, manageable conflicts. However, where the firewall between low-level conflicts and hot wars stands and whether such a firewall even exists merit further examination.

“Dynamic Bargaining” Thesis: Applications

This study employed three case studies to examine what perceptions China’s soldiers, leaders, and diplomats held, and what the policy outcomes were, in order to determine whether the “dynamic bargaining” thesis worked in reality. One important finding from these three case studies is that the PLA is no more bellicose, but is probably more realistic, than either China’s leaders or its civilian bureaucracies.²³ During the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border clash, the PLA’s last large-scale conflict, senior military leaders had considerable reservations about the use of force against Vietnam. During the debate on Taiwan in the wake of the 1995-96 crisis, a policy that has always strongly motivated the PLA, the PLA was cautious not to rush into war. Despite its open demand for a tough stance during the crisis and its persistent push for an increase in its budget, the PLA was unwilling to go down the path of war. The third case study highlighted the PLA’s lobbying for more intervention in the South China Sea in the 1980s, only to lose the debate to the MFA. The PLA gained the upper hand only after 2010, when it allied with the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), the powerful State-owned petroleum companies and, to a lesser degree, the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the increasingly influential Netizens.

Among these three cases, the PLA was least motivated to intervene in the debate leading up to the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese war, but went along with Deng due to domestic political considerations. The PLA was most successful in realizing its primary goal in the debate over Taiwan, as China avoided a war that the PLA was determined not to fight and the top leadership decided to increase the PLA's budget. The third case had mixed results for the PLA, despite the fact that the policy outcome was consistent with the PLA's primary objective. In this case, it is less clear whether the other actors, primarily SOA, pulled the strings, or if this policy direction was undertaken because the top leader-in-waiting, Xi Jinping, advocated it.

This study is primarily dedicated to the period from 1978 to 2012 (Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao). The “dynamic bargaining” thesis, validated based on the PLA's past behavior, may offer some useful insights into the future under Xi Jinping. The son of Xi Zhongxun, who was a reform-minded first-generation leader with both legitimacy and seniority, Xi briefly served as Geng Biao's secretary, the former Secretary General of the CMC and Defense Minister. As a princeling, Xi had a wide network of personal friends and advisers in the PLA who counseled him.²⁴ PLA officers widely perceived Xi to be reform-minded, down-to-earth, and detail-oriented. The PLA clearly approved of Xi, as he was able to establish a power base within the military even before he assumed power.²⁵

Xi's background and personal style allowed him to more easily gain the PLA officer corps' acceptance. Xi's ability to implement “eight rules” for tightening military discipline helped him win the PLA rank and file's respect.²⁶ As a result, Xi had clear advantages over his two immediate predecessors in quickly establishing and

consolidating control over the military. That said, Xi would ultimately consolidate his effective control over the military not just through favorable impressions, but also by initiating a politicized anti-corruption campaign, which removed opposing factions' powerful supporters. In 2014, Xi publicly arrested General Xu Caihou, the former CMC Vice Chairman, and launched an investigation into Guo Boxiong, the other former Vice Chairman, both of whom were well-known supporters of Jiang Zemin. Commanders and Political Commissars of seven Military Regions publicly vowed allegiance to Xi in 2013. In December 2014, under Xi's orders, Song Puxuan, President of National Defense University, switched positions with Zhang Shibo, Commander of the Beijing Military Region who Hu appointed in 2012.²⁷ In the same month, Wang Jianping and Xu Yaoyuan, Commander and Political Commissar of the People's Armed Police (PAP), were transferred and replaced at the same time by Wang Ning and Sun Sijing, respectively.²⁸ A move with more far-reaching implications was Xi's decision in 2013 to draft plans for a sweeping, systematic organizational and command-control reform of the PLA, which may restructure and streamline the redundant system of general departments and military regions. In the post-Deng era, such moves are unprecedented, which signifies that Xi is assuming effective control over the military.

This study put forward the "reliance-control model" to analyze how Party-military relations impact the PLA's influence over policies. It concluded that the PLA's influence in the policy-making process was at its lowest point under Deng Xiaoping, as Deng's political reliance on the PLA was minimal. The PLA's influence under Jiang Zemin was initially weak, but got stronger as Jiang strengthened his effective control over the military. Given its distanced relationship with Hu Jintao, the PLA had negligible direct

influence, though it attempted to push back by seeking support in the media and public domains, while stalling the implementation of policies. Yet the MFA's position and influence declined even more than the PLA's. If one were to apply the "reliance-control model" to analyze Party-military relations under Xi Jinping, one would conclude that the PLA would enjoy greater influence because Xi both relies on the PLA's support and has effective control over the military. This would allow Xi to rely on the military's support and treat it as a core powerbase of his leadership. Xi could thus use the PLA to aid him in pushing through wider and bolder reforms and systematic changes in China.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This dissertation, though built on over 260 interviews with Chinese military officers, government officials, diplomats and academic researchers, has inescapable limitations. The most convincing data are government documents, policy memos, written communications among agencies, and military orders, which would be invaluable resources to understand policy deliberations and bargaining.²⁹ Though it is evolving and pluralizing in some realms, China is still an authoritarian state that regards transparency with a grave sense of insecurity. Though some parts of the Chinese government are more open and transparent than others, any issue, from security and foreign policy to labor disputes and environmental pollution, could be the spark that starts the fire, and can therefore be deemed by the regime to represent a threat to its continued rule. Incidents such as the 1997 detention and 2001 sentencing of Hua Di, a former PLA missile expert who defected in 1989 and subsequently worked at Stanford University, for 15 years, aim to intimidate academic researchers and make them less likely to explore the topic of the

PLA's influence in foreign and security policy-making.³⁰ The arrest of Xu Zerong (David Tsui), who received his PhD in Political Science from Oxford University in 1999, further alarms academics who seek to understand China's foreign and security policy even from a purely historic perspective. Xu was arrested in 2000 and sentenced to 13 years in prison for "illegally providing intelligence to overseas organizations." However, the two documents in question, internal publications on the Korean War (1950-53), were classified after he obtained them and used as evidence to convict him.³¹ Some speculate that it was Xu's writings about the history of China's support for Malaysia's Communist Party through secret radio stations it set up in Yiyang, Hunan Province, from 1967-81, which China had denied in the past, offended the Chinese government and led to his arrest.³² Clearly, the Chinese government does not want scholars to dig into any records that are available to explore the topic that this dissertation seeks to analyze.

This dissertation has to work with all above constraints and tries its best to put the puzzle together. This study of the PLA's influence in China's foreign and security policy-making suggests that the bureaucratic politics model needs to study policy stakeholders not as a constant, but rather as a dynamic, evolving force with institutional memory and a decision-making style that is influenced by its bureaucratic culture. This study also lends support to the neo-institutionalist argument that the power arrangement in a regime could lead to an institutional design that obstructs and challenges bureaucratic cooperation and gives certain actors strategic advantages in bureaucratic bargaining.³³ Future research should thus seek to connect neo-institutionalism with the bureaucratic politics model.

¹ Francis Fukuyama concludes the reason for political decay to the “inability of institutions to adapt to changing circumstances”. See: Francis Fukuyama, *America in Decay: The Sources of Political Dysfunction*, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2014 Issue. Samuel Huntington explains how chaos and disorder can arise from social modernization increasing more rapidly than political and institutional modernization Samuel Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, XVII (April 1965), pp. 429.

² Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 84.

³ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, pp. 62-64, 70-73, 79.

⁴ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945* (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. xix.

⁵ See: Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett, “Introduction”, in Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett ed., *The Political Influence of the Military: A Comparative Reader* (New Haven and Londo: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 14.

⁶ W. H. Morris Jones, “Armed Forces and the State,” *Public Administration* 35 (Winter 1957), pp. 411-16.

⁷ The concept that professionalism removes the military from politics is derived from the classical tradition of administrative theory which assumed that politics can be separated from administration. Therefore, policy-making, the responsility of politically elected officials could be distinguished from policy implementation, the responsibility of bureaucrats or appointed officials. See: Perlmutter and Bennett, “Introduction”, pp. 12-15.

⁸ Harlan W. Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles: Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981*; Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949-1964* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1967); Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao*; Paul H. B. Godwin, *The Chinese Communist Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1988).

⁹ Ellis Joffe, “Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect,” pp. 299-314.

¹⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, pp. 7-18.

¹¹ Zhao Ziyang attempted to convene an emergent meeting of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee, the top decision-making organ mandated by Chinese Constitution, and reverse the trend of an imminent armed crackdown on students demonstration through the “procedure of democracy and law” after he was shunned out of the decision-making process on 17 May 1989 by Deng. Wan Li, top legislator, Peng Chong, Wan’s deputy and Hu Jiwei and 57 other members of the Standing Committee of NPC, were all supportive of Zhao. However, this effort eventually failed. See: Zhao Ziyang, *Gaige licheng* (The course of reform) (Hong Kong: New Century Media and Consulting, Ltd., 2009) and Bao Pu et al., *Prisoner of the State*, pp. 41-53; Lu Chaoqi (former Deputy Editor-in-Chief of People’s Daily), *Internal Notes about June 4th* (Liu Si Neibu Riji) (Hong Kong: xianggang zhuoyue wenhua chubanshe, 2006). The earliest expression of oppositions towards the decision of deploying troops to Beijing in 15-18 May came from the three Deputy Commissioner of the Standing Committee of NPC, who were all former military leaders, indicating the NPC was sympathetic towards Zhao Ziyang before the crackdown. See: Chen Yizi (a former aide and senior policy adviser of Zhao Ziyang), “China: Ten-year Reform and Democratic Movement in 1989” (Taipei, Taiwan: taibei lianjing chuban gongsi, 1990). Among the 20 Deputy Commissions of the NPC Standing Committee, three of them were clearly of military background: Generals Wei Guoqing and Ye Fei, and Lieutenant General Liao Hansheng, according to the author’s count. Database of Members of the NPC Standing Committee, the NPC website, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/daohang/n/2013/0307/c357001-20703934.html>.

¹² Even who hold the utmost authority of the Party is at times dubious. For example, most members of the CCP Central Committee supported Zhao Ziyang and opposed the sending of troops to crack down the students demonstration, according to Yan Jiaqi, a senior aide of Zhao. Therefore, Deng and the more conservative “elders” chose not to convene the CCPCC, the official collective Party leadership, to make the vital decision on troop deployment. See: Hu Ping, “June 4th, A Coup – Interpreting Zhao’s Recorded Memoir”, *Radio Free Asia*, August 3, 2009, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/pinglun/huping/huping-08032009160345.html>.

¹³ David Shambaugh, “The year China showed its claws”, *Financial Times*, February 16, 2010; Michael D. Swaine, “China’s Assertive Behavior – Part Three: The Role of the Military in Foreign Policy,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 34 (Winter 2012), available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/clm36ms.pdf>;

Andrew Scobell and Scott W. Harold, "An 'Assertive' China? Insights from Interviews," *Asian Security* 9, no. 2 (2013); Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?," *International*

Security 37, no. 4 (Spring 2013); Kevin Rudd, "US-China 21: The Future of US-China Relations Under Xi Jinping", Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, April 2015, <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Summary%20Report%20US-China%2021.pdf>.

¹⁴ See: Michael D. Swaine, *America's Challenge: Engaging a Rising China in the Twenty-first Century* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 337-356; Michael D. Swaine, *Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific: The Need for a Stable U.S.-China Balance of Power*, website of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 20, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/20/beyond-american-predominance-in-western-pacific-need-for-stable-u.s.-china-balance-of-power/i7gi>; Robert Kagan, "The United States must resist a return to spheres of interest in the international system," website of Brookings Institution, February 19, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2015/02/19-united-states-must-resist-return-to-spheres-of-interest-international-system-kagan>.

¹⁵ David M. Lampton, "The US and China: sliding from engagement to coercive diplomacy," *PacNet* #63, August 4, 2014, <http://csis.org/publication/pacnet-63-us-and-china-sliding-engagement-coercive-diplomacy>.

¹⁶ Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability," *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 29, Number 1, Winter 2005-06, 145-167; Swaine, *American Challenge*, 338-339.

¹⁷ Robert Blackwill and Ashley Tellis, "Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China," Council for Foreign Relations, Council for Special Report No. 72, March 2015, file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/China_CSR72.pdf; Michael D. Swaine, *Beyond American Predominance in the Western Pacific: The Need for a Stable U.S.-China Balance of Power*, website of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 20, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/20/beyond-american-predominance-in-western-pacific-need-for-stable-u.s.-china-balance-of-power/i7gi>.

¹⁸ Ely Ratner, "China Underterred and Unapologetic," Website of Warontherocks.com, June 24, 2014, <http://warontherocks.com/2014/06/china-undeterred-and-unapologetic/>.

¹⁹ China and Russia started exchanges and training programs for their military officers. In the beginning, the training programs were set up primarily for the PLA officers to learn how to operate the Russian-made armament systems China bought. However, it gradually transformed into a more systematic exchange and training programs which helped maintain a close mil-to-mil relationship between China and Russia.

²⁰ These Russia-trained PLA officers include: Lieutenant General Pan Liangshi, Commander of Beijing Military Region; Lieutenant General Wang Xixin, Deputy Commander of Shenyang Military Region; Major-General Chen Zhaohai, formerly the head of military training for the PLA's General Staff Department, was named deputy commander for the Jinan Military Region; Maj. Gen. Peng Bo, Army Corps Commander of the 40th Army; Maj. Gen. Rong Guiqing, Army Corps Commander of the 54th Army.

²¹ The two officers were Wang Xixin and Xu Linping.

²² There have been two types of training programs Russia provided for PLA officers: senior level and mid-level officers. The training program for senior PLA officers was started in July 1996, through which Russian Military Academy for General Staff provided a one-year training program for 12 division-level PLA officers. After 2000, this program was shortened to five months, provided twice a year and each session for 5-7 officers only. The mid-level training program is provided for 40-50 regiment-level PLA officers every year and each officer will study for a period of 2-3 years in Russian military academies. See: Lin Zhu, "Sino-Russian military cooperation went up", *Southern Weekend*, September 15, 2005, <http://www.southcn.com/weekend/commend/200509150011.htm>.

²³ Andrew Scobell had an excellent differentiation of the words "bellicose" and "hawkish". "A hawkish leader is one who is prepared to use military means short of war – namely, saber-ratting, brinkmanship, and threats of war – to achieve a policy goal – in short, to practice coercive diplomacy... By contrast, the words bellicose and belligerent are...spoiling for a fight in the crisis and/or were warlike by temperament." See: Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond The Great Wall And The Long March* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 171.

²⁴ Interview with senior PLA officers, Beijing, 2011 and 2012.

²⁵ A senior PLA officer recounted an episode during Xi's first trip to the Guangzhou Military Region soon after he took power. While visiting the soldiers' living facility, including their showers, Xi inquired whether the soldiers had hot water for showers. Upon getting an affirmative answer, Xi was satisfied and set to move on, but he immediately returned and turned on the hot water tab. Luckily, hot water came down that day! This episode inserted lingering fears in the officers at Guangzhou Military Region and spread the message that "don't try to fool Xi dada (Uncle Xi)", according to the interview. The author believes that this episode revealed Xi's managing style with the PLA – he does not take words at face value. After serving in the PLA briefly at the CMC and worked in the grass-level governments for so long, Xi understood how subordinates try to please and fool superiors. Interviews with a PLA officer who previously served at Guangzhou Military Region, 2013.

²⁶ This conclusion was based on the author's interviews with multiple senior active-duty officers in both Beijing and other provinces in 2012-2014. The PLA's accounting system was greatly tightened up after Xi took power in 2012. The PLA officers interviewed by the author were extremely cautious not to have their drivers park cars with military licenses near restaurants and tea houses for fear of both the military disciplinary system and street passersby who may take photos of the scene with their cell phones. Some officers were stripped off the privileges such as having designated drivers. However, none of the officers complained about the inconveniences but viewed Xi's measures a positive improvement to reduce the corruptions and waste which was prevalent in the PLA.

²⁷ Zhang Shibo was appointed as Commander of Beijing Military Region by Hu Jintao in October 2012. General Xu Caihou was the superior officer of Zhang Shibo when both men served in Jinnan Military Region.

²⁸ Both Wang and Xu were allegedly close to Xu Caihou and Zhou Yongkang, whom were arrested by Xi. Wang and Xu were allegedly under investigation as soon as they were transferred, Wang to GSD and Xu to Academy of Military Sciences.

²⁹ Chinese government is a government of "over-documentation and archiving," with the example of the MFA documenting and logging everything communication it makes. Interviews with MFA officials and a PLA historian, 2013 and 2014.

³⁰ "Missile Expert Hua Di Sentenced for Ten Years For Revealing China's State Secret," China News Agency, February 7, 2001, <http://www.chinanews.com/2001-02-07/26/68737.html>; Jiang Nan, "Hua Di Sentenced for 15 Years," *Radio Free Asia*, December 5, 1999, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/20304-19991205.html>.

³¹ According to the Regulation on the Duration of the State Secrecy-guarding Law (guojia mimi baomi qixian de guiding) publicized in 1990, top-secret documents remain classified for 30 years, secret documents for 20 years and confidential documents for 10 years, which would be automatically declassified after they reach the expiration. Regulation on the Duration of the State Secret-guarding, issued by National Administration for the Protection of State Secrets (NAPSS) on 19 September 1990 through No. 2 Order of NAPSS, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/0316/c359048-20811944.html>.

³² "Falling into Traps of Classification for Half A Century, the Scholar Who Offended the Chinese Government Will Be Set Free, Voice of America, May 7, 2011, <http://www.voachinese.com/content/article-20110507-china-spy-121436059/781471.html>; "Xu Zerong, The Scholar Who Leaked Secrets, Resumed His Teaching Position in Chinese University, A Rare outcome," *Radio Free Asia*, August 3, 2013.

³³ Amy Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Appendix A: Appendix to Chapter Three: The PLA's Political Representation

This appendix explains the PLA's political representation, as well as the Party's formal power structure (CCP National Congress, CCP Central Committee, Politburo, Politburo Standing Committee). Changes in the PLA's political representation are a reflection of its varying influence in China's foreign and security policy-making process. However, the degree to which the PLA's formal position in various policy-making structures impacts its influence is not as significant as previously judged.¹ Rather, the PLA's political representation in the Party's formal power structure provides insight into how the PLA interacts with other bureaucracies.

“Political representation” refers to the legitimate sphere of political activity in which the PLA is allowed to operate as an organized interest or institution inside China's Party-dominated political system. The Party leadership explicitly delineates the PLA's legitimate boundaries through formal political arrangements. The PLA's representation in the formal power structure such as the Politburo Standing Committee or other Party and political organs is often mistakenly interpreted as a proxy for the PLA's influence in decision-making.² Rather, the PLA's political representation in the Party's formal power structure indicates the degree to which the Party perceives the military to be important. Thus, the PLA's political representation indicates the state of the Party-military relationship. However, the PLA cannot leverage such representation to exert influence on or to mold the Party. Neither does such representation equate to the military's influence in policy-making.

Formal Power Structure: The Party Leadership After 1978

China's Party-dominated political structure could be likened to the Russian Matryoshka dolls. It is composed of concentric layers of power. At the core is the CCP Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC). The next layer is the CCP Politburo and then the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC). Finally, at the outer layer is the CCP National Congress (or the Party's Congress).³ Obtaining a position at the core of the power structure requires one to go through each layer, which is decided through a partially competitive election or selection system. The partially competitive election system, in which designated candidates outnumber the posts, is mainly applied to the outer layers of the power structure (from the Party's Congress to the CCP Central Committee). This system entails both being nominated and getting onto the list of nominated candidates, and receiving enough votes from representatives of the CCP National Congress in order to win out in the preparatory and formal elections.⁴ Advancing onto the Politburo or the PBSC requires an internal selection process, which is basically a black-box operation, with few formal rules and virtually no transparency to the outside world.⁵ The publicly written rules stipulate that candidates must: adhere to the Party's policies and guidelines; possess a strong leadership capability; have the ability to unite other comrades and consciously safeguard the unity of the central leadership; and be clean and self-disciplined, with a good reputation both inside and outside the Party.⁶ The unwritten but real rules based on precedent maintain that candidates are required to retire by 70 (*qishi daxian*).⁷ A candidate can join the PBSC if he/she is 67, but loses the chance if he/she is 68 or older (*qi shang ba xia*).⁸ This informal rule is accepted by all sides.⁹ Political

activity increases in frequency from the outer to the core layers of this concentric power structure — the Party Congress is held every five years, CCPCC meetings are held on average once per year, while Politburo meetings occur once a month and PBSC meetings once a week.

The institutionalization and function of China's Party-dominated power structure has gone through different stages. During Mao's and Deng's eras, which were characterized by strong-man politics, the formal power structure did not contain the highest-level decision-making bodies. Mao's will and Deng's preferences (in consultation with Party elders) dictated China's decision-making regarding major policies.¹⁰ Since the 1990s, when collective leadership was established, the Party-dominated formal power structure has become a leading decision-making mechanism.¹¹

CCP Central Committee

The CCP National Congress is nominally the highest organ of the Party's power. The CCP Central Committee is the official leadership of the CCP, or commonly called the "Party Center" (*dang zhong yang*) as "the CCP Central Committee is the top leadership of the Party while the National Congress of the CCP is not in session."¹² The National Congress of the CCP, which convenes every five years, elects the CCP Central Committee's members. Procedurally, one has to first be elected as a Central Committee member in order to qualify for Politburo or PBSC membership or to become a candidate for the position of the top Party leader. The top Party leader occupied the position of Chairman during Mao's era, and since then the top leader has been the Secretary General of the Party.¹³ The Central Committee is also officially charged with deciding the

membership of the Party Central Military Commission (CMC), which is the military's highest-ranking body.¹⁴

Politburo

The Politburo is composed of the 25 chiefs and deputies of China's core institutions. For instance, the current Politburo, formed under Xi Jinping's new leadership during the 18th Party Congress held in 2012, includes: all members of the PBSC (7 persons), Vice President (1 person), Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress (1 person), Vice Premiers of the State Council (3 persons), heads of the CCPCC agencies in charge of policy research, political and legal work commission, General Office, personnel, propaganda and united front work (6 persons), local Party Secretaries (5 persons from Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Xinjiang and Guangdong), and the PLA (2 persons).¹⁵

Politburo membership typically has two important implications: elevation and recognition of one's political status and ranking in the Party leadership; and the opportunity to advance onto the PBSC or the highest echelon of leadership.¹⁶ However, there have been several instances in which Politburo membership is not a reflection of one's power.¹⁷ In these exceptional cases, entrance into the Politburo has meant promotion in appearance but demotion in actual political power, which is known as an "honorable sidelining." For example, Hu Yaobang cultivated Wang Zhaoguo, the Director of the Central Committee General Office between 1984 and 1986, as his successor. However, after Hu's political downfall, Wang's political career experienced serious setbacks. In 2002, Wang entered the Politburo, which appeared to be a promotion, but he was actually sidelined politically, as indicated by his transfer from Governor of

Fujian Province to a sinecure position as Chairman of the All-China Worker's Union and First Deputy Chairman of the National People's Congress.¹⁸ Another example is Wang Gang, who was the Director of the Central Committee General Office from 1999 to 2007. Although Wang became a member of the Politburo in 2007, he was also transferred to the People's Political Consultative Conference, which was interpreted as a sign that Wang had actually lost power. The above two cases are rare, exceptional cases, in which Politburo membership does not equate to political power granted but rather is a political maneuver to elevate someone in appearance but strip his real power.

During Hu Jintao's era, the Politburo was said to have held monthly meetings to discuss issues of strategic importance.¹⁹ Under Jiang Zemin, the Politburo was largely left out of the decision-making process. However, upon his ascendance to the political power center in 2002, Hu required the PBSC to inform the Politburo of the topics and agendas of its discussions, which in essence expanded the latter members' access to crucial information and greater participation in policy discussions.²⁰ Hu's efforts to strengthen the Politburo were undertaken mainly to negate the influence of the nine-member PBSC, in which Hu could not obtain a majority vote given that it was stocked with officials whose primary allegiance was to Jiang.²¹ Jiang's legacy was also strong in dictating that more decisions had to be made through the PBSC's voting mechanism. Therefore it was in Hu's interest to seek other formal institutions to resist the PBSC's power.

Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC)

The Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), since the establishment of collective leadership, has been designated as the Party's highest decision-making body. Politburo and the PBSC are meant to enforce the authority of the Central Committee when it is not in session. Given the political ranking of PBSC members over Politburo members, PBSC's authority goes beyond that of Politburo. In 1980s, elders, despite not holding government positions, played a crucial role in decision-making. In reality, the PBSC was not the highest decision-making body and was occasionally even dysfunctional during this period.²² The PBSC started to truly function as the top collective leadership in 1992, after the elders-dominated Central Advisory Committee ceased to exist. After 1992, the PBSC started to hold much more policy-making power and represented five constituencies – the Party, government, NPC, People's Consultative Conference, and the military.²³ In 1997, a disciplinary committee was added to the PBSC, and in 2002, the propaganda and the legal systems were both given representation on the PBSC. Each PBSC member retains his own portfolio, which he has ultimate authority over. Other PBSC members, including the top political leader, usually do not encroach on a fellow member's portfolio. How people are appointed to the PBSC is a black box. However, observers do know that it is a combination of credential-based selection, election by Central Committee members, and consultation with retired State and Party leaders and current PBSC members.

Officially, the power of foreign and security policy-making is ultimately controlled by the Politburo and its Standing Committee.²⁴ The clarification of this principle goes back to the establishment of the foreign affairs management system (*waishi guikou guanli zhidu*) in 1958, which stipulated that while government agencies,

in terms of foreign policy, have the right to advise the Party, the Party Center (or CCCPC), the Politburo and the PBSC have the final say.²⁵ China's collective leadership, the Politburo, and the PBSC, approve major foreign policy decisions according to this outline. Issues that reach this level would include China's grand strategy, major foreign policy guidelines, issues directly concerning peace and war, and incidents and contingencies with critical strategic implications for China's future.²⁶

The above is the principle on paper. In reality, China's foreign and security policy-making was still highly centralized during Mao's leadership and he always had the final say on policies, which he would give after consulting with the senior leadership.²⁷ Deng was an institution- and consensus-builder, but he still towered over his colleagues sitting on the Politburo and the PBSC in the area of foreign policy. During Deng's era, the elder leaders had great influence and articulated major disagreements with Deng on economic reform. Therefore, Deng did not rely on the PBSC as the major mechanism to decide on policies of strategic importance. Instead, Deng consulted with elder leaders and others in informal settings or mechanisms such as the Central Advisory Committee, which had the mandate of advising on foreign policy, but not deciding it. Deng always played "a pivotal role" and maintained the final say over important foreign and security policies.²⁸

In the post-Deng era, the PBSC became more of a "collective decision-making body with a division of labor."²⁹ The Politburo and its Standing Committee can wield their power to impact the ultimate decisions over foreign and security policies. However, from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao and now Xi Jinping, top leaders have always sought to maintain the strongest influence over two components in their portfolios: foreign policy

and military affairs. In the division of labor, on foreign policy, the top leader is at least the first among equals. The top leader can and does weigh in on foreign policy, depending on his authority and political power vis-a-vis others on the PBSC. On military affairs, the top leader, as CMC Chairman, often has legitimate and monopolistic authority. Having said that, as Lu Ning points out, the Politburo generally deliberates on key strategic decisions such as “making peace or war or major shifts in foreign policy orientation” in order to add legitimacy to such decisions.³⁰ Additionally, by bringing the Politburo and the PBSC into the decision-making process, the top leader can distribute responsibility among all members of the PBSC, especially when the policy involves great risk and controversy.³¹

The PBSC generally follows the principles of consensus-building and decision by a majority. The PBSC’s voting mechanism in the decision-making process did not start to function until 1989, when there were major divisions within the top leadership regarding how to handle the Tiananmen protests. Reformers such as Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili had major disagreements with conservatives such as Li Peng and Yao Yilin, while Qiao Shi and Yang Shangkun (who could attend the PBSC meetings but did not have voting rights) were undecided but initially leaned toward Zhao.³² The PBSC’s voting mechanism was used with increasing frequency once Hu Jintao took power. According to Hu Angang of Tsinghua University, the PBSC under Hu was more like a board meeting principally because his political authority was simply insufficient to push through his agenda.³³

The Party general secretary, China’s top political leader, will not initiate a vote on certain policies unless he is sure the result will be in favor of his preferred policy. In order to get a sense of where other PBSC members stand on issues, the top leader will use

informal channels, known as “feeling the bottom”(*mo di*) or “blowing the wind” (*chui feng*). When the Secretary General knows the majority of the PBSC members’ positions are consistent with his preference, he will use the voting mechanism to translate his personal position into a collectively made official decision.

An example of not bringing an issue to a vote in the PBSC, because such a vote would lead to a policy that the top leader didn’t favor, is when Jiang did not initiate a discussion in the PBSC on how to handle the Falungong movement in 1999. Jiang understood that since Zhu Rongji and Li Ruihuan opposed severe repression of Falungong, even if he initiated a vote, it would not pass. When 100,000 Falungong members surrounded Zhongnanhai, the compound where China’s top leadership work and live, Zhu invited three Falungong members into Zhongnanhai for a chat and promised that as long as Falungong operated within the confines of the law, the central leadership would not suppress the movement. Zhu’s moderate position convinced the Falungong to withdraw immediately. However, Zhu’s success in using words – not force as Jiang had advocated – to persuade Falungong members to back off upstaged Jiang and made him even more determined to turn up the heat against the movement. Since Jiang knew he could not get a vote to pass in the PBSC, he chose to circumvent it by writing a letter to all members of the Politburo, warning of the grave danger of a moderate policy toward Falungong. Jiang warned that the Falungong movement, if left unaddressed, could transform overnight into China’s “color revolution” if it chose to. Jiang’s letter touched a nerve in the Politburo and trumped the opposition of Zhu Rongji and Li Ruihuan. In the end, Jiang’s strategy prevailed and a majority of the Central Committee supported the persecuting of the movement and arresting of its followers.³⁴

The PLA's Political Representation in Party Leadership

PLA Representation in the Party Central Committee

An examination of the PRC's history indicates that the military's representation on the CCP Central Committee is a reflection of how much the Party needs the military, rather than an institutionalized method for the military to exert influence through its representation in this body. Military representation in the 6th Party Congress in 1928 accounted for less than 10 percent of the Central Committee. This increased to 36 percent in 1934 and reached 60 percent in 1936, a trend that reflected the situation of the time. In 1936, the Nationalist Army's encirclement campaign threatened the CCP's survival. The military's political importance grew, along with its role as the Party's ultimate protector. The PLA's representation on the Central Committee in 1938 rebounded to 35 percent and peaked at above 60 percent at the 7th CCP National Congress held in 1945, when China descended into Civil War and the only hope for CCP victory depended on the military.³⁵

The military's representation on the Central Committee stood at 56 percent in 1954, but declined to 32 percent in 1955 as Chinese leaders' focus shifted from military struggle to economic construction, a policy formalized by the 8th Congress held in 1956. The military's representation further declined to 26 percent in 1967-68 because of the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Then, because the military played a crucial role in maintaining social order during the Cultural Revolution, this representation rose to above 50 percent in 1969-71. After the 913 Incident (Lin Biao's death), the military's representation on the Central Committee dipped to 40 percent between 1973 and 1980.

After China shifted its focus to economic development in 1978, the military's representation on the Central Committee fell to 24 percent between 1982 and 1984 and then down to 20 percent and below afterwards. The number of PLA representatives in the 13th CCP National Congress in 1987 totaled 259 (13.4 percent). The percentage of military representatives in the last two CCP National Congresses, the 17th congress in 2007 and the 18th congress in 2012, was consistently 13 percent, while this representation reached 28 percent in the 9th congress in 1969 while the PLA was pulled in the political whirlpool to stabilize the whole nation. Thus, the importance of the military to the central mission of the CCP at the time determines the military's representation on the Central Committee.

The Central Committee's meetings almost exclusively focus on China's domestic affairs rather than foreign and security affairs. Central Committee meetings in the past have focused on personnel arrangements, economic development policy, and Party affairs. If defense was briefly mentioned, for example in the publicized strategy document from the 5th plenary meeting of the 17th Party Congress, it would be with regard to commonly agreed upon and noncontroversial goals such as "strengthening military modernization" and "enhancing capability to conduct multiple military missions with a focus on winning local wars under informationized conditions."³⁶

Each member of the Central Committee serves a five-year term, during which the Central Committee on average holds seven plenary meetings. The first plenary meeting, which is usually held immediately following the Party Congress, always focuses on personnel arrangements (election, selection, and approval of Party leadership such as PBSC members and Secretaries of the Central Committee Secretariat). The second

plenary meeting is usually held before the National People's Congress (NPC) which convenes each March. This plenary meeting focuses on personnel arrangements of government agencies. Then, in the year following the Party Congress, four plenary meetings (3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th plenary meetings) are held. The 3rd plenary meeting usually publicizes important decisions on economic development, which is used as the guideline for economic development for the next several years.³⁷ The 4th plenary meeting focuses mostly on building the Party. The 7th plenary meeting, held in the last year of the term, always focuses on the next Party Congress.³⁸

There is one case in which the PLA banded together to influence the CCPCC election result. In 1997, Bo Xilai, at this time the mayor of Dalian, was not elected to the Central Committee at the 15th CCP National Congress — not even as an alternate member — because the military representatives had blocked his selection. Bo offended Dalian's local military units by kicking them out of Dalian's downtown district, where real estate had dramatically increased in value. The Party Congress's military representatives totaled roughly 13 percent, and proved to be a powerful body within the Central Committee when they took a unified stance on an issue. However, this was a rare case and proved to be the exception rather than the rule in terms of the PLA utilizing its collective presentation in the Party system.³⁹

PLA Representation on the Politburo and PBSC

Since the 13th CCP National Congress in 1987, the PLA has consistently maintained two seats on the Politburo.⁴⁰ Yet since this time, with the exception of 1992-97, the PLA has not had any representation on the PBSC. However, the military's

representation or lack thereof on the Politburo and PBSC is not an accurate reflection of the PLA's policymaking power. It is highly doubtful that the Politburo is the appropriate platform for the military to influence the political leadership on certain policies. Since 1979, almost all Politburo members, with a few notable exceptions such as Qian Qichen, lack interest and expertise in foreign affairs. If anything, the military's representation on the Politburo demonstrates its power relative to the civilian foreign affairs system. Neither the Foreign Minister nor the State Councilor on Foreign Affairs has been a Politburo member since 1998.⁴¹

Though the military has had only minimal representation on the Politburo and PBSC since 1987, it has two important roles within these bodies: observing and speaking without voting; and providing intelligence for certain members. During Deng's era, Yang Shangkun, the CMC's Secretary General and later its Vice Chairman, sat in on PBSC meetings but did not have voting power. Some have alleged that after Yang declined membership to the PBSC, Deng offered this arrangement to him and Yang not only sat in on PBSC meetings but also acted as the connection and liaison point between Deng and PBSC prior to 1992.⁴² Deng also could have proposed this setup since beginning in 1978-79 he pursued a reduction in the military's representation on the Politburo and PBSC.⁴³ Admiral Liu Huaqing was the last PLA officer to sit on this body (1992-97). CMC Vice Chairmen were consistently invited to join PBSC meetings, but this was an ad hoc arrangement and was not part of a formal institutional design. The PLA's intelligence organ, mainly the PLA GSD 2nd and 3rd Departments, has its own channels to send reports of high strategic value to PBSC members of the PLA's choosing.⁴⁴

The following table lists the PLA's representation on the CCP Politburo, PBSC, and Central Committee from 1956 to 2012:

Appendix A.2 The PLA's Representation on the CCP Power Structure (1956-2012)

Party Congress	Year	PLA Rep. in Party Congress ⁴⁵	PLA Rep. on Central Committee (Formal Members)	PLA Rep. on Central Committee (Alternative Members/ Back-bencher)	PLA Rep. on Politburo (incl. Alt. Members ⁴⁶)	PLA Rep. on PBSC
7 th	1945	171/547 (31%)	10/28 (60%) ⁴⁷	/17	7/13 (54%)	Not Set Up
8 th	1956	/1021	30/97 (31%)	30/73 (41%)	8/23 (35%)	2/11 (18%)
9 th	1969	422/1512 (28%)	85/170 (50%)	55/109 (50%)	13/25 (52%)	1/5 (25%)
10 th	1973	/1249	78/195 (40%)	25/124 (20%)	9/26 (35%)	5/11 (45%)
11 th	1977	/1510	61/201 (30%)	39/132 (30%)	11/26 (42%)	2/8 (25%)
12 th	1982	/1690	50/210 (24%)	25/138 (19%)	9/28 (32%)	2/6 (33%)
13 th	1987	259/1997=13%	23/175 (18%)	23/110 (21%)	2/18 (11%)	0/8 (0%)
14 th	1992	/2035	44/189 (23%)	23/130 (18%)	2/22 (9%)	1/7 (14%)
15 th	1997	/2108	41/193 (21.2%)	26/151 (17.2%)	2/24 (8%)	0/7 (0%)
16 th	2002	259/2154 (12%) ⁴⁸	44/198 (22%)	24/158 (15%)	2/25 (8%)	0/9 (0%)
17 th	2007	296/2217 (13%)	41/204 (20%)	24/167 (14%)	2/25 (8%)	0/9 (0%)
18 th	2012	300/2270 (13%)	45/205 (22%)	17/169 (10%)	2/25 (8%)	0/7 (0%)

Source: Name List of 1st-6th CCP National Congress Representatives, Shanghai People's Congress, 2007; Dictionary of CCP Central Committee (1921-2003), CCP Party History Press, 2004; and CCP Organizational History Resources (1921-1997), CCP Party History Press, 2000; transcripts of Party Congress spokesmen's Q&As with journalists; various scholarly papers.⁴⁹

**Author's note: The figures on PLA representation in the Party Congress are incomplete due to lack of data in public material; the shaded areas indicate the period this dissertation studies.*

Organs that Serve the Party Leadership

Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee

From 1956-66, the PLA and the government worked together through the mechanism of the Secretariat. All reports to the PBSC, from the government, military and lower-level Party entities, had to go through the Secretariat. The Secretariat dealt with the Party's routine operations by making decisions and planning and overseeing the implementation, unless the issues in question were too significant and needed to be discussed by the PBSC. Before any major policy recommendations were sent to the Politburo and PBSC, the Secretariat would often hold initial discussions and consultations, provide its own opinion, and draft initial policy documents. For example, the Secretariat determined how the 1986 student movement was to be handled.⁵⁰ Also, as Bao Tong, Zhao Ziyang's key adviser, reminisced, the Secretariat once dealt with the reform plan concerning the relationship between the Party and the Worker's Union, as well as the Party and the Chinese Youth League.⁵¹ Wu Jiexiang, a clerk who once worked for the Secretariat in the 1980s, pointed out that was dealt. The Secretariat was a flexible mechanism, convening both weekly and ad hoc meetings depending on the issues at hand.⁵²

Between 1956 and 1966, the Secretariat had two Secretaries who dealt with PLA affairs. Secretary Tan Zheng managed the PLA's political and personnel affairs, while Secretary Huang Kecheng dealt with the CMC's affairs. After a hiatus during the Cultural

Revolution, the Secretariat's function was reinstated in 1980, with Hu Yaobang serving as the Secretary General, and 10 others serving as secretaries to the Secretariat. At this time, the Secretariat was "a Secretariat of the Party leadership (Central Committee), not a Secretariat of the Politburo, nor of the Standing Committee."⁵³ This meant that the Secretariat was on the front line of decision-making, while the Politburo and even the PBSC were in secondary positions.⁵⁴ Additionally, all members of the Secretariat were equals and had one vote. But by September 1982, the Secretary General of the Secretariat had also become the Secretary General of the Central Committee, making him the supreme leader of the Party, and thus presiding over the Secretariat. As such, his power went beyond the Secretariat, allowing the Secretariat to reach the peak of its power.

The power of Secretariat as an institution had been an indicator of the power of the Party Secretary General, till the rules of games were significantly changed under Xi Jinping.⁵⁵ Following the Secretary General of the Central Committee Hu Yaobang's downfall in 1987, the Secretariat, often seen as Hu's power base, was significantly weakened as an institution, with its number of secretaries reducing to five to seven, which was roughly half that of the past (11-12).⁵⁶ Since the 13th Party National Congress in 1987, Secretaries have no longer been chosen through elections by the Central Committee, but instead through nominations by PBSC and approvals by the Central Committee.⁵⁷ More importantly, its powers in decision-making were drastically reduced. Secretariat has been transformed into an executive body to implement policies rather than make policies. Secretariat has been clearly put in a position subordinate to Politburo and PBSC, with no overlapping area of work and then no friction with State Council.⁵⁸ Thus,

the Secretariat was no longer a relatively independent power center separate from Politburo and PBSC.

Secretariat's power resurged in 1997 when Jiang Zemin consolidated his political power, but declined again in 2002 when Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang as Party Secretary General and President. Secretariat's importance as an institution revived in 1997 under Jiang Zemin, with all its secretaries unprecedentedly most chosen from Politburo and PBSC members. Secretariat's portfolio was also unprecedentedly expanded to cover discipline inspection, military affairs, economic affairs, personnel, public security and legal affairs. In 2002, after Jiang transferred the political power to Hu, members of Secretariat kept generally lower political status. Three out of seven Secretaries were not members of Politburo. Financial and economic affairs were cut out from Secretariat's portfolio. More importantly, these non-PBSC Secretaries had to answer to PBSC members who were in charge of their line of work, a measure which significantly weakened the Secretary General of the Party and strengthened PBSC as a collective leadership.⁵⁹ For example, Minister of Propaganda, Liu Yunshan, who sat on Secretariat as a Secretary, answered to Li Changchun, the PBSC member who oversaw propaganda and education. Similarly, when Secretary General of Discipline and Inspection and Secretary General of Political and Legal Affairs Commission elevated to be members of PBSC since 2002 (16th Party Congress), their deputies, Deputy Secretary General of Discipline and Inspection and Minister of Public Security joined the Secretariat as Secretaries. As Party Secretary General has only one vote on PBSC, despite the more political "weight" his vote carries, this institutional arrangement greatly constrained Secretary General's power.

Secretariat under Xi Jinping (2012-2017) faced a completely revamped political game. Xi established new venues to exercise his highly concentrated power while existing mechanisms were kept but weakened to the core. Secretariat during this period was to a large degree limited to managing Party affairs. Secretariat members could still regularly attend Politburo meetings, while Secretaries as non-Politburo members have no voting rights. Secretariat, as an institution, had diminished its influence over decision-making.

General Office of the CCP Central Committee

Traditionally, the General Office of the Central Committee (*zhonggong zhongyang bangongting*) has been a locus of power in China's elite politics. With Zeng Qinghong (Director, 1993-99), Wang Gang (Director, 1999-2007) and Ling Jihua (Director, 2007-13) as its directors, there was a dynamic whereby the General Office gradually overpowered the Central Foreign Affairs Office (*zhongyang waiban*) in foreign and security policy making. The General Office is primarily in charge of safety, logistics, and secretarial (organizing meetings, entering documents sent from lower-level Party entities into the record) work for the Party Secretary General, but also accomplishes such tasks for other PBSC members.⁶⁰ The General Office also: gathers information on important and dynamic domestic and international situations; integrates research; drafts, revises and proofreads major Party documents and speeches; and deals with complaint letters from the public.

Zhao Ziyang was the director of the General Office between 1978 and 1982. His successor and close follower, Hu Qili, was director from 1982 to 1983.⁶¹ After Hu was

Qiao Shi (1983-84), Wang Zhaoguo — regarded as Hu Yaobang's designated successor — (1984-86), Wen Jiabao (1986-1993), and Zeng Qinghong — Jiang Zemin's right-hand man — (Deputy Director in 1989, became Director in 1993). From 1999 to 2007, Wang Gang took over the directorship after serving as Deputy Director for five years. Following him was Ling Jihua, a close associate of Hu Jintao (Director, 2007-13), and Li Zhanshu currently serves as the current Director under Xi (2013-).⁶²

The General Office's directors usually hold crucial political power because they control the agenda and facilitate the Politburo and the PBSC's process of decision-making. Directors often consult with and inquire the opinions of retired and current PBSC members on particular policies or personnel decisions, in order to assist the top leader in making a decision. Directors also actively collect information for decision-making, draft certain documents, and supervise the implementation of decisions made by the top leader or the PBSC. They are the gatekeepers in terms of information and people the top leader has access to. Directors also maintain the top leader's public image, as they have the authority to censor any news report relating to the top leader. Directors also play a secretarial role by arranging meetings, archiving documents, and taking responsibility for the security and health of PBSC members.

Beginning with Hu Qili, every director of the General Office later became a Politburo member, which reflects the office's power.⁶³ During Xi's era, the General Office's director has assumed even more importance. Upon becoming Director of the General Office under Xi in 2013, Li Zhanshu was immediately admitted to the Politburo. In 2014, Li became the Executive Director of the State Security Council, one of the three superstructures Xi Jinping established as a result of the Third Plenum and an organization

that observers liken to the U.S. National Security Council. Additionally, the General Office will house the State Security Council. This further indicates the General Office's importance and continuing power under Xi. Having said this, the General Office has been primarily focused on domestic issues such as personnel/cadre promotion, legislation, and the economy. The only areas in foreign and security policy the General Office has a stake in are China's policies toward Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, all of which are regarded as internal affairs of China with international implications.⁶⁴

With regard to such areas of foreign or quasi-foreign policy, the General Office played a central role in the bureaucratic turf wars during the 1980s and early 1990s between the Hong Kong-Macao Work Committee and the State Council's Hong Kong-Macao Office.⁶⁵ The General Office, since Zeng Qinghong became its Director in 1993, has also consistently exerted influence over the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG). The General Office's influence on Taiwan affairs and its close proximity to the top political leadership could tilt the balance decisively in any policy debate between the MFA and the PLA. This happened when Yang Yi, Rear Admiral and Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies of PLA National Defense University, criticized China for not taking a harsher position toward Chen Shui-bian earlier. Yang's criticism triggered a turf war between the PLA and the civilian foreign affairs system (MFA), which advocated a more patient and moderate stance toward Taiwan. In this instance, Wang Gang, then Director of the General Office who had direct access to Hu Jintao, was said to have played a key role in shaping China's policy and directing it more toward the civilian foreign affairs system.

PLA Representation in the Secretariat and General Office

The PLA traditionally has no representation in the General Office.⁶⁶ While the PLA had representation on the Central Committee Secretariat from the time it was revived in 1981 until 2002, since 2002 it has been sidelined from this organization. Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, the PLA has traditionally had regular representation on the Secretariat. Luo Ruiqing, then Chief of General Staff, was the Secretariat's Secretary in the 1950s. After the Secretariat was resurrected in 1981, Yang Dezhi, then-PLA Chief of General Staff, was included as one of its Secretaries, and in 1989 Yang Baibing, then CMC Secretary General, joined this body.⁶⁷ In 1997, Zhang Wannian, then CMC Vice Chairman, and in 2002, Xu Caihou, First Deputy Director of the GPD and then Vice Chairman of the CMC, joined the Secretariat.

After Hu Jintao came to power, he effectively removed Xu Caihou from the Secretariat. Following the 16th Party Congress in November 2002, the Secretariat required its members to attend its office in Zhongnanhai together once per week. This new arrangement “created an inconvenience for the work of Zhou Yongkang, then Minister of Public Security and Xu Caihou, the PLA GPD Chief” who was on the way to the CMC Vice Chairmanship, and so neither attended. Therefore, since 2002 the PLA no longer has actual representation on the Secretariat.⁶⁸

PLA Representation in CCP and State Leadership

Who counts as a member of the leadership? In China, “Party and State leaders” refers to the top two levels of public servants, which are those at the State Principal and State deputy levels. Officials at the State principal level (*zhengguoji*) or Class I Cadres

(*yiji ganbu*) have an administrative rank equal to heads of state and presidents in other countries. Officials at the State Principal level include the Secretary General of the CCPCC, President, CMC Chairman, Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, Premier, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Vice President, and all members of the PBSC. Additionally, the CMC Vice Chairman, who runs the CMC's daily operations, normally enjoys the status of a top-level public servant.

“Party and State leaders” also includes officials at the State Deputy level (*fuguoji*), which falls immediately below the State Principal level. This category includes Vice Premier, State Councilor, Vice Chairman and Secretary General of the NPC, Vice Chairman and Secretary General of the CPPCC, Vice Chairmen of the CMC, Politburo members, and Alternative members and members of the Secretariat. Prior to 1982, the CMC's Standing Members (*changwei*) were included in this category. However, in 1982, this position was abolished. Since 1982, only Vice Chairmen of the CMC, which numbered four in 1982 and two after 1987, were counted as “Party and State leaders.”⁶⁹ Members of the CMC have enjoyed a status above that of the Minister Principal level (*zhengbuji*), but below that of the State Deputy level. Therefore, members of the CMC are *not* officially counted as “Party and State leaders.”

Among officials at the State Principal level, the PLA's representation declined significantly between 1977 and 1987, but slightly rebounded between 1987 and 1997. However, among officials at State Deputy level, the military's representation fell more drastically.⁷⁰ In 1977, two senior PLA officers sat on the five-member PBSC.⁷¹ In 1982, there was only one PLA representative on the PBSC.⁷² By 1987, there was no longer any

professional soldier officially sitting on the PBSC. As Deng receded from official power and Jiang worked to consolidate his position as China's top leader (1989-94), the military's lost seat on the PBSC was compensated for by another position at the State Principal level – Presidency. After the 13th National Congress of the CCP in 1987, Deng gave up his membership on the Central Committee and in 1989 transferred the Chairmanship of the CMC, his last official position, to Jiang. In 1988, Yang Shangkun, the CMC Vice Chairman who was running its daily operations, took over the Presidency from Li Xiannian.

When the position of the Presidency was created under the 1982 Constitution, it was widely understood among legal experts that the President “shall not undertake legislative, administrative or military prerogatives in order to protect the status of President as the highest symbol of the state” and “shall prevent the undue concentration of power.”⁷³ Therefore, one may conclude that Deng, politically weakened in 1987, was attempting to create platforms from which the PLA, and Yang Shangkun in particular, could increase its voice. After the Yang Brothers' political downfall at the 14th Party Congress in 1992, the Presidency was transferred from Yang Shangkun to Jiang Zemin. Additionally, Liu Huaqing, then Vice Chairman of the CMC, was nominated by Deng and served as a member of the PBSC from 1992 to 1997. Thus, the PLA, with relative consistency, held a seat at the State Principal level during the 1980s and most of the 1990s till Liu's retirement.⁷⁴ The PLA's seats at the State Deputy level decreased from four in 1982 to one from 1987-89, and then went back two after 1989, which it has consistently remained at.

Analysis and Summary of the PLA's Political Representation

Three conclusions can be reached on the nature of the PLA's political representation:

First, the PLA's political representation in China's power apparatus does not equate with its political influence. Rather, the PLA's political representation largely indicates how the Party assesses the military's importance in meeting the nation's most important or urgent needs.

The PLA's political representation has been declining since the 11th Party Congress in 1977. The PLA's shrinking political representation in the 1980s was largely a result of China's increasing focus on economic modernization, which came at the expense of military modernization. This national priority was derived from a Party-military consensus that formed after the catastrophic Cultural Revolution, which highlighted the need for China to drastically change course. In addition, Deng's dominant control and leadership over the military after 1978 helped to implement this decision. Deng relentlessly pushed the PLA to return to the barracks, and strengthened the government's institutionalization and ability to govern. The military acquiesced and receded from the political stage, and its opinions in opposition of the top leadership were only voiced privately. The PLA understood that the disastrous politicization of the military during the Cultural Revolution, as well as the 913 Incident, sullied the PLA's image. As a result, Deng deliberately pushed military officers out of the Politburo and reduced the military's representation in the Party's power structures.⁷⁵ In the 1980s, it was also difficult for the military to speak out on almost any issue related to policy without raising eyebrows.⁷⁶ As Deng exerted a dominant influence in the foreign and

security policy-making arena during this period, he worked hard to strengthen institutions, which allowed for the MFA's professionalization and the expansion of its influence.

A close look at the CCP's formal power structure and the Party's supporting agencies indicate that the bureaucratic structure of the CCP leadership has followed a basic rule: an organization's authority can be adjusted depending on the degree of power and authority it possesses vis-a-vis other political actors. In general, an organization that is closely associated with a top leader is often neglected or even completely abolished by his successor, as a way for him to sideline political opponents. Then, a new position or institution is established to take over the abolished or sidelined one's power and responsibilities. Despite the formal mandate of certain institutionalized decision-making mechanisms, top political leaders often bypass them or use procedural obstacles to push through alternative agendas. This is the fundamental reason why the PLA's political representation is more symbolic than substantive under the CCP's current governing structure, typified by limited intraparty competition. In the PBSC, the top decision-making mechanism, even when a professional soldier held a full seat from 1977 to 1997 this turned out to have little, if any, impact on the PLA's influence.

If a competitive electoral mechanism is introduced into the CCP or the overall political system in the future, the relationship between the PLA's political representation and its political influence may fundamentally change. The PLA's political representation could become crucially important if the selection of each layer of the CCP's power structure becomes fully competitive, as was suggested by reformers such as Zhao Ziyang in 1980s. In such a circumstance, the PLA's collective representation could indeed

fundamentally impact its influence in both the composition of the CCP's power structure and the policy-making process.⁷⁷

Second, the PLA's political representation in the Party power apparatus plays an important role in the bureaucratic bargaining that takes place with bureaucracies in other realms, particularly the government system. In any cross-system coordination platform, those who hold the highest ranking in the Party often take the lead. For instance, the Arms Exports Leading Group (later renamed the Arms Trading Leading Small Group), established with supervision from both the PLA CMC and the State Council, was co-chaired by Admiral Liu Huaqing, CMC Vice Chairman and PBSC member, and State Councilor and Vice Premier Zou Jiahua.⁷⁸ Because of Admiral Liu's high political ranking in the Party, he took the actual lead in both decision-making and implementation. Therefore, a new office, the Arms Trading Office, was established and housed under the CMC as the executive arm of this leading small group.

Third, the PLA's greater political representation may not positively contribute to its overall political influence. It could be more difficult for a top civilian leader to establish effective control over the military if the military has substantial political representation, and the top leader could feel threatened by this dynamic. In such a scenario, the top leader could take steps to cut the military out of the power structure and minimize its influence over the policy-making process. Thus, the military's greater political representation could in fact hinder its ability to influence policies.

¹ Saunders and Kiselycznyk pointed out that "shifts in military representation have been regarded as an indicator of waxing or waning military influence." See Michael Kiselycznyk and Phillip C. Saunders, *Civil-Military Relations in China: Assessing the PLA's Role in Elite Politics*, China Strategic Perspective 2, (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 2010), p. 7. Similar view points were expressed by

others. See Alice. Miller, "Hu Jintao and the PLA Brass," *China Leadership Monitor* 21 (Summer 2007); Kim, Taeho, "Strategic Relations Between Beijing and Pyongyang: Growing Strains amid Lingering Ties," in *China's Military Faces the Future*, ed., James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh, *China's Military Faces the Future* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 295–321.

² Ibid.

³ The CCP National Congress (*zhongguo gongchandang quanguo daibiao dahui*) is completely different from the National People's Congress (NPC). The former is theoretically the highest body within the CCP, which convenes once every five years, with the mandate to revise the Party's Constitution, elect the Party's leadership in the Central Committee, and pass resolutions on major policies concerning the Party. The National People's Congress (NPC) (*quanguo renmin daibiao dahui*) is the PRC's legislature and is theoretically the highest body of the PRC stipulated by China's Constitution, which has the mandate of passing legislation, revising the Constitution and supervising its enforcement, supervising the work of the government led by the State Council, and electing the President, Premier and the Chairman of the State Military Commission, President of the Supreme Court, Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate as well as Vice Premiers, State Councilors, and Ministers. NPC is held in March every year, followed by Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which together are called "the two conferences" (*liang hui*).

⁴ The partially competitive election, initiated by Hu Yaobang and continued by Zhao Ziyang, was introduced during the election of representatives of the 13th CCP National Congress held in 1987, and memberships of CCP Central Committee as well as government-controlled social groups and People's Congress at different levels. This system was later slightly reversed by the addition of "preparatory election" before the formal election to prevent drastic surprises.

⁵ Take the example of the 18th CCP National Congress held in 2012. 2,307 Party representatives nationwide elected 205 CCP Central Committee members and 171 alternate members of the CCPCC. From the 205 formal CCPCC members, 25 were elected as members of the Politburo. From the 25 members of the Politburo, 7 members were elevated to PBSC. The selection of Politburo members was legitimized through non-competitive voting. Therefore, those who appear on the list will be named as Politburo members or PBSC members. However, the voting was still carried and the voting result was made public. Liu Yunshan, PBSC member in charge of propaganda, for example got only 2,294 votes, lower than votes obtained by Wang Yang (2,300) and Liu Yandong (2,301), both of whom were not admitted onto the PBSC.

⁶ Zhang Sutang and Qin Jie, "A Strong Collective Leadership That Creates A New State of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: A Documentary on How The New Central Leadership of the Party Was Produced," *Xinhua News Agency*, November 15, 2012.

⁷ This rule was introduced in 1997 by Jiang Zemin to allegedly remove his political opponent Qiao Shi.

⁸ This rule was introduced in 2002 by Jiang Zemin to allegedly remove his political opponent Li Ruihua.

⁹ This rule is more elastic than the other two rules. It was applied when Bo Xilai, a representative of conservative leftists and a candidate favored by Jiang Zemin's camp, and Wang Yang, a representative of liberalism and a candidate favored by Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao, were obstructed from entering PBSC at the same time in 2012. Therefore, this rule emerged as a consensus that those who enter PBSC will not cause serious frictions within the Party.

¹⁰ Influential Elders in Deng Xiaoping's era included Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Ye Jianying, Bo Yibo, Peng Zhen and Wang Zhen. These Elders did not necessarily assume any official position. They mostly wrote letters, made phone calls and convened mostly in unofficial settings to offer their opinions. In 1987, Deng "retired" from the Politburo, followed by a series of measures to institutionalize the formal official power structure.

¹¹ Kou Chien-wen, "Marching Towards Path of Power Center: Political Fluctuation of CCP Civilian Leaders After 1987," *Taiwanese Journal of Political Science* 45 (September 2010), pp. 1-36.

¹² Zhan Shanqin, "Exploration of the election of Central Committee from the 1st Congress to the 6th Congress of the CCP," *CCP News*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/85037/85041/7358083.html>.

¹³ "List of Top Leaders of the CCP," *Xinhua News*, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-10/25/content_2136722.htm.

¹⁴ CCP Constitution, Article 23, October 21, 2007.

¹⁵ In comparison, the Politburo formed in the 17th Party Congress in 2007, under Hu Jintao's leadership, included: all members of the PBSC (9 persons), Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress (1

person), Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) (1 person), Vice Premiers and State Councilor of the State Council (4 persons), heads of the CCPCC agencies in charge of personnel, propaganda and united front work (3 persons), local Party Secretaries (5 persons, from Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Tianjin, Guangdong,), and the PLA (2 persons). The State Council at that time had four Vice Premiers and five State Councilors. Dai Bingguo, then State Councilor on foreign affairs was not a Vice Premier. Mayors or governors from Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong and Xinjiang.

¹⁶ In the Post-Deng era, this is particularly true. Without a Politburo membership, one has basically no chance to be Party General Secretary or PBSC member.

¹⁷ It is similar to the value of military ranks and administrative positions of the PLA officers.

Administrative positions matter much more than military ranks.

¹⁸ The author's conclusion that Wang Zhaoguo was sidelined despite the fact that he elevated into Politburo because Chairman of All-China Worker's Union is an important position of an utterly insignificant organization while the First Deputy Chairman of the National People's Congress is an utterly insignificant position of an important organization.

¹⁹ Carol Lee Hamrin, "The Party Leadership System", from Lieberthal and Lampton, ed., *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, pp. 102-3. The finding was confirmed by interviews with senior Chinese officials present in Politburo meetings in 2005-2010.

²⁰ This information was also briefed to the Elders including Bo Yibo and Song Ping regularly.

²¹ The PBSC under Hu Jintao had members with close ties to Jiang Zemin such as Zeng Qinghong, Jia Qinglin, Huang Ju, Wu Bangguo and Li Changchun (and possibly Wu Guanzheng).

²² PBSC was dysfunction between the downfall of Hu Yaobang in January 1987 and the holding of the 13th Party Congress at the end of that year. Zhao Ziyang, told Yang Jisheng, a liberal journalist, in an interview in 1996, "there wasn't PBSC after the downfall of Yaobang. The (highest decision-making body) then was a five-person small group led by me to run routine work. The personnel affairs, even the selection of the PBSC members for the 13th Party Congress (to be held in 1987) were run by a 'six-person small group', who was led by Bo Yibo and answered directly to Xiaoping...and Chen Yun." This was confirmed by Li Rui, who recounted Deng's explanation for rarely holding any PBSC meeting because, in Deng's words, "We don't agree so let's not hold (PBSC) meeting anymore. I go to visit Chen (Yun)'s home once a year." See Li Rui, "Dialogues with (Hu) Yaobang Before His Death," *dangdai zhongguo yanjiu* (Contemporary China Research) 4 (2001), p. 37.

²³ Division of labor under each PBSC varies slightly from one another after 1992. For example, under the 17th PBSC, Hu Jintao oversees the Party guidelines, foreign policy, military affairs and cross-Strait relations; Wu Bangguo, head of National People's Congress, oversees legislation and legal system construction; Wen Jiabao, Premier, oversees economic and social development and government institutional reform; Jia Qinglin, head of the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference (so called China's "democratic parties"), oversees united front work, religious and minority affairs; Li Changchun, head of the Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilization, oversees ideology, propaganda, education and cultural affairs; Xi Jinping, heir apparent and Vice President, assists Hu Jintao with the Party affairs, Party building, cadre evaluation and Hong Kong and Macao affairs; Li Keqiang, Vice Premier and heir apparent for the Premier position, assists Premier Wen Jiabao with financial, monetary policy and macroeconomic control; He Guoqiang, head of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, oversees the building of a clean and honest government, supervision of cadres and anti-corruption work; and Zhou Yongkang, secretary of Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, oversees public security, prosecution, court system, anti-espionage and state security.

²⁴ Politburo reports to CCP Central Committee (CCPCC), which is most often referred as the "Party Center". CCPCC, with more than 200 formal members, convenes at least once a year according to the 12th Party Constitution. Therefore, the policy-making power of CCPCC in reality rests with Politburo and PBSC.

²⁵ CCP Organizational History Archives, vol. 5, pp. 41-3.

²⁶ See Zhang Yi, "Basic procedure of China's foreign policy-making", *Oriental Morning Post*, March 18, 2013.

²⁷ Men Honghua et al., "China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism". To take a historical example, on the decision to enter the Korean War, Mao Zedong had to follow the rule of collective decision-making, at least initially. When Mao leaned towards military engagement in response to Kim Il-sung's request for

China's help, a majority disagreed in the next day's CCPCC Secretariat meeting. This forced Mao to shelve the telegraph he was prepared to send to Stalin about China's intent on military participation. Instead, Mao informed Stalin of the decision by the Secretariat against sending troops to Korea. See Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chong (逢先知和金冲), *Biography of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)*, Volume I, (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 1991), p. 118.

²⁸ A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China: Structure and Process*, Westview Press/SAIS Papers in International Affairs Number 9, 1985, 2 and 9, 12-14.

²⁹ Men Honghua et al., "China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism".

³⁰ Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership".

³¹ Interview with a Guangdong-based researcher and a political insider, who is also a close family member of a senior official under Hu Yaobang, Guangdong, January 2013.

³² In the emergency Standing Committee meeting held on May 17 at Deng Xiaoping's residence, the decision regarding enforcing Marshal Law was made. Li Peng and Yao Yilin voted yes, Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili voted no, while Qiao Shi, not surprisingly, equivocated and thus abstained. The voting was not conducted by hand counting, rather positions delineated through open expression of opinion. Yang Shangkun subsequently revised and eventually supported the decision to impose Martial Law. Deng made the final decision in the end. See Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang*, Simon and Schuster, 2009, 27-28.

³³ Hu Jintao was greatly constrained as he lacked consistent support in the Standing Committee and his own vote was just that, one vote and did little to sway others to his side. "China had never had this situation of seven emperors ruling one country," said Cheng. When it came to the decision to commemorating the politically disgraced former Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang (Hu Jintao's mentor), the Standing Committee was against it, an incident that greatly angered Hu Jintao. In the end, he did not let an open vote take place but insisted on going ahead with the commemorating of Hu Yaobang. It was one of the rare acts of open remonstrance to the rest of the leadership by Hu during his rule. Interview with Interview with a Guangdong-based researcher, 2013.

³⁴ Interview with a Guangdong-based researcher, 2013.

³⁵ See Zhu Mengchang, et al., "CCP's Transformation".

³⁶ "Bulletin of the 5th Plenary Meeting of the 17th CCP Central Committee", *Xinhua News Agency*, October 18, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-10/18/c_12673082.htm.

³⁷ For example, in the 3rd plenary meeting of the 11th Party Congress, it was announced to shift China's focus to "socialist MNDernization development" while the policy of reform and opening-up was announced. In the 3rd plenary meeting of the 12th Party Congress, it was announced to expand the focus of reform from rural regions to cities and the whole economic area. In the 3rd plenary meeting of the 13th Party Congress, the focus of China's reform and development was shifted to adjust economic environment and re-establish economic orders. In the 3rd plenary meeting of the 14th Party Congress, China announced the policy to develop "socialist market economy". In the 3rd plenary meeting of the 15th Party Congress, the policy of reforming agriculture and the management of rural regions was publicized. In the 3rd plenary meeting of the 16th and 17th Party Congress, the focus was put on rural land policy and then balanced development of urban and rural regions.

³⁸ An example could be found through this link, which listed the full texts of bulletins of all five plenary meetings of the 17th Party Congress. See http://baike.iguosou.com/baike/2010-12/16/c_12887456.htm.

³⁹ Interview with a PLA officer in summer of 2013, Beijing. The description of the event by this PLA officer has not been collaborated by a second source.

⁴⁰ Among the 25 formal Politburo members elected in 1982, seven were senior PLA officers. Among the three alternative members of Politburo, one was senior PLA officer.

⁴¹ The last State Councilor on foreign affairs, who also occupied the position of Foreign Minister, was Qian Qichen. In 1991, Qian, then Foreign Minister, was promoted to be State Councilor. In October 1992, Qian became a member of Politburo. In 1993, he was promoted as Vice Premier. He kept the position of Foreign Minister till 1998. His successor, Tang Jiaxuan, both as Foreign Minister and later State Councilor on foreign affairs never became a member of Politburo.

⁴² Interview with family members of retired senior officials in Hu Yaobang's era, 2012.

⁴³ "General Zhang Aiping in the waves of reform", *xinwen wubao*, March 2, 2009.

⁴⁴ For extremely sensitive information, the PLA provides reports to certain leaders and, in extremely sensitive cases, would require the documents sent back, to eliminate leaks. Interview with a PLA officer, Beijing, summer of 2012.

⁴⁵ The figure in this column (PLA representation in Party's Congress) is recorded according to He Qinglian and Zhao Yi. See He Qinglian, "Special Role of the Military in China's Politics", *Phoenix News*, September 14, 2012; Zhao Yi, "Democracy in the Party starts with election", *nan feng chuang* (South Wind) 3 (2012), <http://www.hao1111.cn/a/nfch2010/32693.html>.

⁴⁶ Alternative Members have right to speak but no rights to vote.

⁴⁷ The military representatives only accounted for less than 10% of the Central Committee in 1928 when the 6th CCP National Congress was held. After Kuomintang started to strike the CCP bases in 1931, the percentage of military representatives in CC started to surge, reaching 36% in 1934. See See Zhu Mengchang, et al., "CCP's Transformation".

⁴⁸ Among them, 11 PLA representatives were specially invited, i.e. chosen not through an elective procedure, and those PLA representatives who were full representatives totaled 248.

⁴⁹ Analysts have different ways of defining "PLA representatives" The author's approach is to only count those with active positions in the PLA at time of the event as "PLA representatives". The differences in results through different approaches could be seen for example in Chen Wenzheng's analysis. Chen believed that PLA representatives accounted for 52% (13 among 25) in the 12th CCP Politburo. Those counted as PLA representatives include Wang Zhen, Wei Guoqing, Wu Lanfu, Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, Li Desheng, Yang Shangkun, Yang Dezhi, Yu Qiuli, Song Renqiong, Zhang Tingfa, Nie Rongzhen and Xu Xiangqian. On the author's count, only nine of them are qualified as PLA representatives. Li Xiannian, Wang Zhen, Wang Lanfu, and Song Renqiong, based on the positions they held in 1982, should not be counted as PLA representatives. See Zhu Mengchang, et al., "CCP's Transformation"; Chen Wenzheng, "Implication of the CCP 18th Congress to the PLA," *xin shehui zhengce shuangyuekan* (New Social Policy Bi-monthly) 25 (December 2012).

⁵⁰ Wu Jiayang, "Yang Shangkun, Big Player of Power Games during June 4th Incident," *xin shi ji* (New Century), June 13, 2012.

⁵¹ Wu Wei, "Bao Tong Instructed to Establish the Central Political System Reform Office," *New York Times* (Chinese), August 11, 2014, <http://www.chinaelections.org/article/228/232697.html>.

⁵² Yang Shangkun, *Yang Shangkun's Diary* (Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001).

Bo Yibo, *Ruogan zhongda juece yu shijian de huigu* (Reflections on Several Important Decisions and Events), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang dangxiao, 1991).

⁵³ Ye Jianying, "A speech at the first meeting of the 5th plenary session of the Party's 11th congress", February 24/1980, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-02/04/content_2548203.htm. Original Chinese quote: "是党中央的书记处，不是政治局的书记处，也不是政治局常委的书记处。"

⁵⁴ Ye's original quote was "书记处处于第一线，中央常委、政治局处于第二线。"

⁵⁵ Xi established the State Security Commission as his own power vehicle and weakened all other existing institutions and mechanisms.

⁵⁶ Before 1982, Secretary General of the Secretariat was the first ranking Secretary. Also, before 1982, Secretary General of the Secretariat was a position different from Secretary General of the CCP Central Committee, though Deng Xiaoping had both positions under Mao. In 1981, the Secretariat was resumed after its abolishment in 1966, with Hu Yaobang as its Secretary General. In 1982, the positions of Secretary General of the Secretariat and Chairman of the CCP Central Committee were abolished at the same time. A new position, Secretary General of the CCPCC was established in replace of the CCPCC Chairman as the top position in the Party. The Secretariat then no longer has a position of Secretary General.

⁵⁷ In 1987, the third paragraph of Article 21 of the Party Constitution ("Central Secretariat, under the leadership of Politburo and its Standing Committee, handles routine work of the Party Center.") was revised to: "Central Secretariat is the executive body of Politburo and its Standing Committee; its members are nominated by PBSC and approved by the meeting of Central Committee." See the resolution on the revision of CCP Constitution, approved by the 13th Party Congress on 1 November 1987, Nanjing University's online museum on CCP history, <http://history.nju.edu.cn/dsbwg/show.php?id=1342&menuid=74>.

⁵⁸ Secretariat, under Hu Yaobang, played a crucial role in decision-making, which elders criticized went beyond the power of Politburo and PBSC. Secretariat also clashed over policies and had "turf wars" with

State Council. Yang Jisheng's interview with Zhao Ziyang in 1996 quoted Zhao saying that "my relationship with Hu (Yaobang) was basically amiable but not very good. He indeed had personality fault. For example, we had disagreements on (who handles) economic affairs, we all agreed at Xiaoping's residence that economic affairs shall be left mainly to Financial and Economic Affairs Leading Small Group and State Council. In 1984, (Hu Yaobang) demanded each ministry to brief him under the excuse of 'correcting harmful practices'. In these briefings, he set targets for these ministries without informing the State Council. Therefore, these ministries came to State Council for funding and material, claiming to reach the target Yaobang set. In summary, we are basically in agreement on the issue of reform and we support each other. In economic development, we have our disagreements. He still carried the approach of mobilizing the mass and using propaganda, (which I disagreed)." See Yang Jisheng, Appendix I (1995 Interview with Zhao Ziyang) to *Political Struggles*. Kou Chien-wen had an excellent analysis on historic evolution of institutions such as Secretariat and GO. See Kou Chien-wen, *The Evolution of Chinese Elite Politics*, pp. pp. 247-49.

⁵⁹ In this session of Secretariat (2002-2007), only Zeng Qinghong held the PBSC membership.

⁶⁰ It is worth mentioning that Yang Shangkun, Secretary General (1981-82) and then Vice Chairman (1982-92) of the CMC, was the first and long-term Director of General Office (1945-65).

⁶¹ Hu Qili suffered a political demise for sympathizing with the June 4th student movement and was removed from the position in 1989.

⁶² All directors of GO automatically became Secretaries of Central Committee Secretariat.

⁶³ Hu Qili, Qiao Shi, Wen Jiabao, and Zeng Qinghong all became PBSC members.

⁶⁴ In 1983, Xu Jiataun was directly appointed by Deng and Hu Yaobang to head the Hong Kong-Macao Work Committee, treated as a dispatch agency (派出机构) of the General Office. The formal line of command requires the secretary of the Work Committee to answer to the director of the Hong Kong-Macao Office. However, Xu himself had a status equal to minister and provincial governor while having a close relationship with China's top leaders. Therefore, the Work Committee in reality was "equal to rather than subordinate to the Hong Kong-Macao Office" under the State Council. Because of the General Office's ability to directly reach the top leaders, Xu was able to circumvent Ji Pengfei, Director of then Hong Kong-Macao Office and report directly to Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang and even Deng Xiaoping. His advice on placing a PLA garrison in Hong Kong influenced Deng Xiaoping's decision on this issue. Xu also had a close relationship with Yang Shangkun, then Secretary General and Vice Chairman of the PLA CMC. Xu's methods caused serious tension between the two bureaucracies which in reality were of equal status, though one was under the Party leadership and the other under the government. The bureaucratic in-fighting between the two did not end until Xu Jiataun, closely associated with Hu and Zhao, fled to the United States in 1990, leaving the Work Committee to fall under the control of Hong Kong-Macao Office. See Gao Wanglai, "Sino-British Negotiations on Democratic Reforms in Hong Kong" (PhD diss., Waseda University, 2009), available at <https://dspace.wul.waseda.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2065/34958/3/Honbun-5122.pdf>; Kam Yiu-yu, "Decision-making and Implementation of Policy towards Hong Kong," in Hamrin and Zhao (eds.), *Decision-Making in Deng's China: Perspectives from Insiders* (N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995), 101-110.

⁶⁵ The Hong Kong-Mao Work Team or Work Committee used to be an underground network of CCP officials based in Hong Kong after 1949, dedicated to publicity, publication, culture, education, managing united front organizations in industrial and trade circles as well as in financial and business institutions funded by the CCP. It used to be the sole channel which the CCP used to pass on its guidelines on Hong Kong affairs. After mid-1950s, it started to report directly to CCP Central Committee's Foreign Affairs Office. See Kam, "Decision-making towards Hong Kong," pp. pp. 101-10.

⁶⁶ As the GO weighs in on Taiwan policy-making, the PLA leadership and the General Office interact directly with regard to important Taiwan-related policies.

⁶⁷ Lu Ning, *Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking*, p. 11.

⁶⁸ Hu Jintao maneuvered this step and justified it as a way to "enable the senior PLA generals to concentrate more on military affairs, which facilitated the CMC's control and supervision over troops", according to Hu. See "Big Highlights on New Team of the CMC," *Wenhuipao*, November 1, 2007..

⁶⁹ Between 1987 and 1989, only one professional soldier was CMC Vice Chairman as the other Vice Chairman, Zhao Ziyang, sat on that position because he was then the designated successor of Deng. After

1989, the CMC always kept two professional soldiers as Vice Chairmen while the “apparent heir”, always a civilian, was added in as the third CMC Vice Chairman.

⁷⁰ As Vice Chairmen and Standing Members of the CMC were counted as “Party and State leaders”, the military representation at State deputy level declined even more drastically after 1982. The statistics of the make-up of the CMC structure between 1977 and 1982 below is based on Yu Jie’s article. See Yu Jie, “Evolution and Change of the CMC,” *jun shi shi lin* (Military History Circles) 5 (2004)

1977, 5 Vice Chairmen, 8 Standing Members of the CMC

1978, 6 Vice Chairmen, 8 Standing Members of the CMC

1979 6 Vice Chairmen, 8 Standing Members of the CMC

1980, 6 Vice Chairmen, 13 Standing Members of the CMC

1981, 6 Vice Chairmen, 14 Standing Members of the CMC

1982, 4 Vice Chairmen, 0 Standing Members of the CMC

The abolishment of the Standing Members of the CMC in 1982 indicated the drop of military representation at the State deputy level from 13 in 1977 to 4 five years later.

⁷¹ The two senior PLA officers sitting on PBSC in 1977 are Deng Xiaoping, Chief of General Staff, and Marshal Ye Jianying, Vice Chairman of the CMC.

⁷² Marshal Ye Jianying, Vice Chairman of the CMC, was on PBSC in 1982; Because of reasons listed in reference 131, Deng was not counted as a professional soldier on PBSC.

⁷³ Li Buyun, “Analysis of China’s institution of Presidency,” *sixiang zhenxian* (Ideology Front), June 30, 1983.

⁷⁴ After Jiang consolidated his power, the PLA permanently lost a seat at the State Principal level.

⁷⁵ Zhang Sheng, *Walking From Wars*.

⁷⁶ The sensitivity of the PLA speaking up about foreign and security policies is partly due to Mao and Zhou’s legacy of top leaders exerting firm control on foreign policies themselves, and partly due to the PLA’s negative image in the nation’s nascent memory.

⁷⁷ The PLA’s representation in the Central Committee is 20-22%. There is no other larger organized interest group. The representation of either central government agencies or local governments are nominally larger than that of the PLA. However, their interests, even categorized in one group, are more fragmented and more prone to clashes.

⁷⁸ Zou Jiahua is son-in-law of Marshal Ye Jianying.

Appendix B: The Evolution of the PLA's Soldier's Oath

(Emphasis throughout author's own):

The 1956 version of the PLA's Soldier's Oath:

"I am a citizen of the People's Republic of China. To join in the People's Liberation Army, to take the glorious duty of **a revolutionary soldier**, I solemnly swear: First, under the leadership of **Chairman Mao**, I will become a brave, loyal and resourceful soldier who strictly abide by disciplines, comply with regulations, obey the command of the military and **sacrifice everything** in order to defend the motherland; Second, I will work hard and learn modern military science, improve my political and educational level, become skilled in mastering weapons, get ready to fight at anytime, overcome all difficulties, and resolutely destroy the enemy; Third, I will uphold the people's government, **love the people**, take care of weapons and state property, and adhere to national and military secrets, bear eternal allegiance to **the motherland and the people**; Fourth, upon violation of the oath, I am subject to punishment by law of the state and the military."¹

The 1984 version of the PLA Soldier's Oath:

"I am a citizen of the People's Republic of China and thereby perform the honorable duty by serving in the military service in accordance with the law. In order to take up the sacred duty of **a revolutionary soldier**, I swear: I **love the Chinese Communist Party, love the socialist motherland, love the People's Liberation Army**; I will observe the military doctrine, regulations and rules, obey orders, follow the command, try to learn

military, political, scientific knowledge, work hard to sharpen skills of killing enemies, and take good care of weapons and armaments, protect military secrets, carry forward the fine tradition of participating in construction of socialist material and spiritual civilization, fight battles bravely, fear no sacrifice to defend the motherland and safeguard the **socialist construction**. Above oath, I am determined to fulfill my oath and never violate it.”²

The 1997 version of the PLA Soldier's Oath:

“I am the People's Liberation Army soldier, I swear: **to obey the leadership of the Communist Party of China**, to **serve the people** wholeheartedly, to obey the order and observe the discipline, to **fight heroically and fear no sacrifice**, work hard to practice skills of killing enemies, resolutely complete the mission; under no circumstances betray the motherland the military.”³

The 2010 version of the PLA Soldier's Oath:

“I am a People's Liberation Army soldier, I swear: **to obey the leadership of the Communist Party of China**, **to serve the people** wholeheartedly, to obey the order and strictly abide by disciplines, to **be brave and persevere**, fear no sacrifice, and work hard on skills of killing enemies, always be ready to fight, never renegade the military and fight to safeguard the motherland to my death.”⁴

¹ PLA GSD and General Politics Department, “Regulation on Work and Oath of Enlistment for New Recruits” (关于新兵入营后的工作和入伍宣誓的规定), February 1956. The Chinese text of the oath is: “我是中华人民共和国的公民，为参加人民解放军，负起革命军人的光荣职责，特郑重宣誓：一、我在毛主席的领导下，成为忠勇机智，严守纪律，遵守条例，服从命令的军人，为了保卫祖国，不惜牺牲一切；二、努力学习现代化的军事科学，提高政治、文化水平，熟练手中武器、时刻准备战

斗，克服一切困难，坚决消灭敌人；三、拥护人民政府，热爱人民，爱护武器和国家财产，严守国家和军事机密，永远忠于祖国和人民；四、我如违背誓言，愿受国法和军纪的严厉制裁。”

² The Eighth PLA Internal Affairs Order, Article 8. The Chinese text of the oath is: “我是中华人民共和国的公民，依照法律服兵役是我应尽的光荣义务，为了负起革命军人的神圣职责，我宣誓：热爱中国共产党，热爱社会主义祖国，热爱中国人民解放军，执行军队的条令、条例和规章制度，服从命令，听从指挥，努力学习军事、政治、科学文化，苦练杀敌本领，爱护武器装备，保守军事机密，发扬优良传统，参加社会主义物质文明和精神文明建设，英勇战斗。不怕牺牲，保卫祖国，保卫社会主义建设。以上誓词，我坚决履行，决不违背。”

³ The 10th PLA Internal Affairs Order, Article 12, The Chinese text of the oath is: “我是中国人民解放军军人，我宣誓：服从中国共产党的领导、全心全意为人民服务，服从命令，严守纪律，英勇战斗；不怕牺牲，忠于职守，努力工作，苦练杀敌本领，坚决完成任务；在任何情况下，绝不背叛祖国，绝不背叛军队。”)

⁴ The 12th PLA Internal Affairs Order. The Chinese text of the oath is: “我是中国人民解放军军人，我宣誓：服从中国共产党的领导，全心全意为人民服务，服从命令，严守纪律，英勇顽强，不怕牺牲，苦练杀敌本领，时刻准备战斗，绝不叛离军队，誓死保卫祖国。”

Appendix C: Reflections on Interviewing and Interviews

This appendix provides a brief explanation and statistics concerning the 260 interviews, especially those conducted with 138 active-duty and retired PLA officers, as well as reflections about conducting interviews in China.

I began learning to conduct interviews in 1994, when I started working for *China Daily* as a reporter and op-ed writer covering China's foreign and security policies, Chinese politics, and military affairs. During this period, it was relatively easy for me to get interviews with members of sensitive government and military agencies, since *China Daily*, often seen as an English-language counterpart to the *People's Daily*, the government's mouthpiece, was part of the government, and therefore I was viewed as part of the system or an insider. Many important policy-makers in the government and military felt comfortable speaking freely with me, and it fell to me to interpret the information and publish only those views that were clearly "legitimate" to publish under the strict censorship and self-censorship of China's official media. Therefore, I often had too much information to handle. My situation formed a sharp contrast to the state of almost all non-Chinese journalists and researchers.

I accumulated a large network of contacts within the government and the PLA due to my experience as a journalist from 1994-2000 and then as a researcher at American think tanks (*World Security Institute* and later *Global Zero*), where I was responsible for developing collaborations with Chinese government and military entities. I founded *Washington Observer Weekly*, a successful Chinese-language e-magazine with

320,000 subscribers in the Greater China Region in 2002, and co-founded *China Security Quarterly*, an English-language policy journal dedicated to bringing Chinese voices to Washington. Both projects helped me resume and maintain active interactions with many of those I got to know during my years at *China Daily*. As I started my field research in 2010 as a PhD candidate at Johns Hopkins SAIS, I was facing a very different situation, as I was no longer an insider of the system. Nonetheless, I was able to draw upon my wealth of contacts, many of whom I have known since the mid-1990s.

Between 2010 and 2015, I conducted interviews with 260 Chinese contacts for this dissertation, and based on my experience have a few thoughts on best practices for conducting research based on interviews. First, trust is the first and foremost prerequisite for Chinese people within the system to talk to me, thanks to my previous work experience.¹ I have known many of my interviewees for two decades, and I respect and care immensely about their own work and their families. I also understand the difference between façade and substance, a perception from inside and outside. It is always worthwhile to investigate whether a view is expressed strategically and is intended to deliver a certain message to the audience, or whether the interlocutor actually holds this belief. The protection of one's sources is the first priority of research, as my advisor Professor David M. Lampton has warned.² That said, it is a struggle for me not to give credit to those who have offered me their invaluable insights and thank them by name in this dissertation.

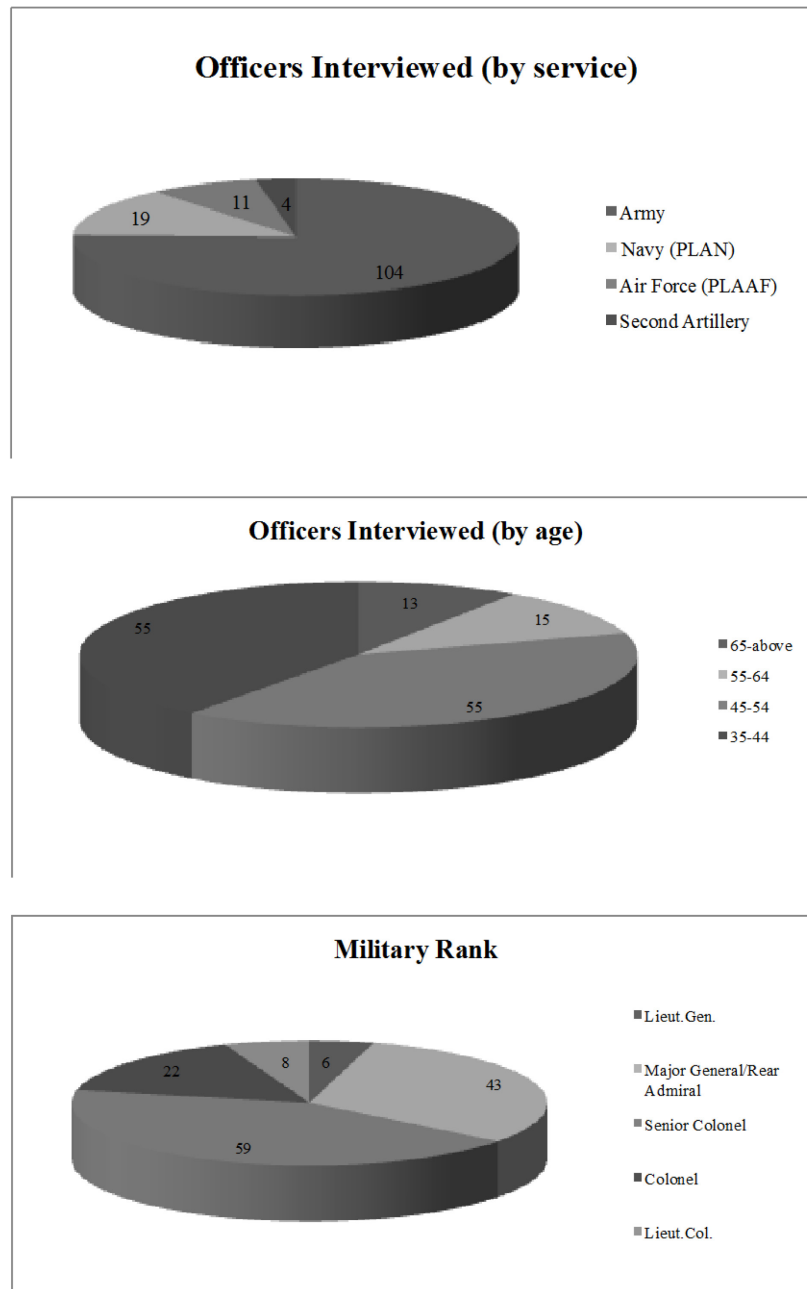
There are a few techniques I found useful when conducting my research interviews. First, the interviews should be conducted in circumstances that are as relaxing as possible. I find, just as Professor Lampton does, that recording is not helpful and

interviewees often reject being recorded.³ Also, using a structured questionnaire does not go well. Repeated interviews with the same interviewee over a period of time is the best method to gain a more complete picture of the interviewee's perceptions. Second, as a researcher, one needs to "triangulate" – finding ways to fact-check by digging into publicly available information and interviewing multiple unrelated sources on those facts. Important facts in particular need such triangulation. Third, the researcher needs to "learn and challenge" – learning sufficient facts and in the end challenging certain interviewees when contradictions arise. When the researcher conducts sufficient interviews, a picture on the subject under study begins emerge, but there will surely be contradictions, especially when interviewees come from opposing camps. The researcher then needs to return to certain interviewees and raise the alternate views, especially those provided by opposing camps, or those that the researcher believes will provoke a reaction, which could drag out more facts and evidence. In the end, it is up to the researcher to decide how to interpret contradictions.

Among the 260 interviewees, 138 are active-duty, retired, or decommissioned PLA officers, and 122 are government officials and policy researchers. I conducted a dozen interviews with Western-based China observers, including retired policy-makers and military officers, to gain their insights about the PLA and China's foreign and security policy-making based on their interactions with China.

Among the 138 PLA officers, a considerable number of them had the experience of being stationed with combat troops. A majority of them have a ranking of senior colonel and major general, who participate in different stages of policy deliberations, coordination, policy-making, and implementation. Several of them directly serve the PLA

leadership. Among the 138 PLA officers, several of them specialize in training and evaluating officers, and therefore are exposed to a large number of officers, especially at the junior level. More details are as follows:



¹ Trust is listed by David M. Lampton as the “coin of the realm.” See David M. Lampton, *Following the Leader*, p. 243

² Ibid, p. 242.

³ Ibid, p. 243.

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Bachelor of Law, International Relations, People's University of China (Renmin University), 1994

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins SAIS

Washington DC

January-May 2015: Teaching Assistant

Taught two seminar classes with a total of 22 graduate students, part of the curriculum of Professor David Lampton's class on U.S.-China relations.

PLA National University of Defense Technology

Changsha, Hunan Province, China

2014: Visiting Lecturer

Teach international security crisis management: theory of coercion and crisis de-escalation and conduct a crisis simulation as pedagogic tool.

Brookings Institution

Washington DC

2013 – 2014: Pre-doctoral Research Fellow

Conduct research on China's foreign policy and PLA modernization; attend workshops and closed-door round-tables with U.S. military fellows; participate in Evergreen Workshop on future crisis scenarios organized by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Global Zero

Washington DC

2008 – 2012: China Liaison

Promote to the Chinese government, military and the public the initiatives of eliminating nuclear weapons globally; interact with relevant bureaucracies, military entities and the 9th Academy (nuclear weapon lab) and China's arms control community to conduct dialogues and collaborative research on nuclear arms control; recruit supporters in former diplomatic corps, senior military officers, outstanding scientists in China.

World Security Institute

Washington DC

2002 – 2011: Research Analyst of China Program

Participate in China-related research projects; responsible for liaising and cooperation efforts between WSI (formerly, the Center for Defense Information) and the Chinese government, research institutes, academic institutions and military entities; co-founded

the Beijing Office of WSI in 2004; co-founded China Security, a quarterly English journal that brings Chinese authored policy analysis to Washington.

Washington Observer

Washington DC and Beijing

2002 - 2011 Founder and Editor in Chief

Establish and manage Washington Observer Weekly, an independent Chinese-language e-magazine that directly reaches 320,000 elite subscribers in Greater China Region, which offers in-depth news analysis on U.S.-China relations.

China Daily

Beijing, China

1994 – 2000 Reporter and Commentator

Writing analyses on China's foreign policy, internal politics, military affairs and legislative process. Awards received including: first prize -- China's International News Award (awarded by State Council of China) in 1997; third prize -- China's International News Award awarded in 1995; second prize -- Legislation News (awarded by China's People's Congress) in 1997.

PUBLISHED WORKS (PARTIAL LIST):

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